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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
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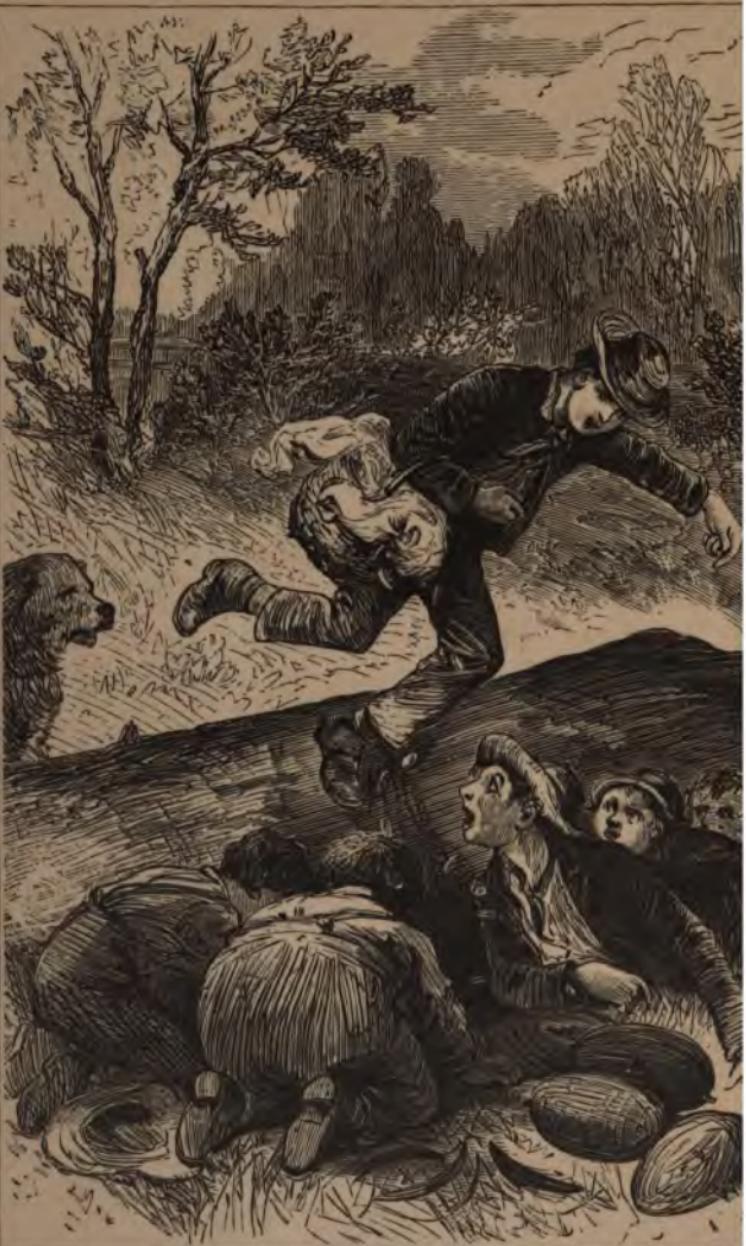
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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

1918





THE ADVENTURE WITH THE BASKET OF COIN.

THE MUSICAL

BY JAMES RICE.



THE MUSICAL
BY JAMES RICE.



THE ANTLERED WITH THE FLICKER OF DEER.

A

CHANCE FOR HIMSELF;

OR,

JACK HAZARD AND HIS TREASURE.

BY

J. T. TROWBRIDGE,

AUTHOR OF "JACK HAZARD AND HIS FORTUNES," "LAWRENCE'S ADVENTURES,"
"COUPON BONDS," ETC.



BOSTON:

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
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A CHANCE FOR HIMSELF.

CHAPTER I.

THE THUNDER-SQUALL.



N a high, hilly pasture, occupying the northeast corner of Peach Hill Farm, a man and two boys were one afternoon clearing the ground of stones.

The man—noticeable for his round shoulders, round puckered mouth, and two large, shining front teeth—wielded a stout iron bar called a “crow,” with which he pried up the turf-bound rocks, and helped to tumble them over upon a drag, called in that region a “stun-boat.” The larger of the boys—a bright, active lad of about fourteen years—lent a hand at the heavy

rocks, and also gathered up and cast upon the drag the

smaller stones, on his own account. The second lad — nearly as tall, and perhaps quite as old as the other — helped a little about the stones, but divided his attention chiefly between the horse that drew the drag, and a shaggy black dog that accompanied the party.

"Come, boy!" said the man, — enunciating the *m* and *b* by closing the said front teeth upon his nether lip, — "ye better quit fool'n', an' ketch holt and help. 'S go'n' to rain."

"Ain't I helping?" retorted the smaller boy.
"Don't I drive the horse?"

"A great sight, — long's the reins are on his back, an' I haf to holler to him half the time to git up an' whoa. Git up, Maje! there! whoa! — Jack's wuth jest about six of ye."

"O, Jack's dreadful smart! Beats everything! And so are you, Phi Pipkin!" said the boy, sneeringly. "You feel mighty big since you got married, don't ye? — I bet ye Lion's got a squirrel under that big rock! I'm going to see!" And away he ran.

"That 'ere Phin Chatford ain't wuth the salt in his porridge, — if I do say it!" remarked Mr. Pipkin. "I never did see sich a shirk; though when he comes to tell what's been done, you'd think he was boss of all creation. Feel as if I'd like to take the gad to him sometimes, by hokey!"

"O Jack!" cried Phin, who had mounted a boulder much too large for Mr. Pipkin's crow-bar, "you can see Lake Ontario from here, — 'way over the trees there! Come and get up here; it's grand!"

"I've been up there before," replied Jack. "Haven't time now. We shall have that shower here before we get half across the lot."

"Come, Phin!" called out Mr. Pipkin, "there's reason in all things! We'll onhitch soon's we git this load, an' dodge a wettin'!"

"Seems to me you're all-fired 'fraid of a wetting, both of ye," cried Phin. "'T won't hurt me! Let it come, and be darned to it, I say!"

This last exclamation sounded so much like blasphemy to the boy's own ears, and it was followed immediately by so vivid a flash of lightning and so terrific a peal of thunder, from a black cloud rolling up overhead, that he jumped down from the rock and crouched beside it, looking ludicrously pale and scared; while the dog, dropping ears and tail, and whining and trembling with fear, ran first for Jack's legs, then for Mr. Pipkin's, and finally crouched by the boulder with Phin.

"You're a perty pictur' there!" cried Mr. Pipkin, with a loud, hoarse laugh. "Who's afraid now?"

"Lion, I guess,—I ain't," said Phin, with an unnatural grin. "Only thought I'd sit down a spell."

"It's as cheap settin' as standin',—as the old hen remarked, arter she'd sot a month on rotten eggs, an' nary chicken," said Mr. Pipkin, whose spirits rose with the excitement of the occasion.

"There's a good reason for the dog's skulking," said Jack. "He's afraid of thunder, ever since

Squire Peternot fired the old musket in his face and eyes. Hello ! another crack ! ”

“ I never see sich thunder ! ” exclaimed Mr. Pipkin. “ Look a’ them rain-drops ! big as bullets ! ”

“ It’s coming ! ” cried Jack ; and instantly the heavy thunder-gust swept over them.

“ Onhitch ! ” roared out Mr. Pipkin, in the sudden tumult of rain and wind and thunder. “ I must look out for my rheumatiz ! Put for the house ! ”

“ We shall get drenched before we are half-way to the house,” replied Jack, dropping the trace-chains. “ I go for the woods ! ”

“ I’ll take Old Maje, then,” said Mr. Pipkin.

But before he could mount, Phin, darting from the imperfect shelter of the rock, ran and leaped across the horse’s back. As he was scrambling to a seat, holding on by mane and harness, kicking, and calling out, “ Give me a boost, Phi ! ” Mr. Pipkin gave him a boost, and lost his hat by the operation. That was quickly recovered ; but before the owner, clapping it on his head, could get back to the horse’s side, the youthful rider, using the gathered-up reins for a whip, had started for the barn.

“ Whoa ! hold on ! take me ! ” bellowed Mr. Pipkin.

“ He won’t carry double — ask Jack ! ”

Flinging these parting words over his shoulder, the treacherous Phin went off at a gallop, leaving Mr. Pipkin to follow, at a heavy “ dog-trot,” over the darkened hill, through the rushing, blinding storm.

Jack was already leaping a wall which separated

the pasture from a neighboring wood-lot. Plunging in among the reeling and clashing trees, he first sought shelter by placing himself close under the lee of a large basswood; but the rain dashed through the surging mass of foliage above, and trickled down upon him from trunk and limbs.

Looking hastily about to see if he could better his situation, he cast his eye upon a prostrate tree, which some former gale had broken and overthrown, and from which the branches had mostly rotted and fallen away. It appeared to be hollow at the butt, and Jack ran to it, laughing at the thought of crawling in out of the rain. He put in his head, but took it out again immediately. The cavity was dark, and a disagreeable odor of rotten wood, suggestive of bugs and "thousand-legged worms," repelled him.

"Never mind!" thought he. "I can clap my clothes in the hole, and have 'em dry to put on after the shower is over."

He stripped himself in a moment, rolled up his garments in a neat bundle, and placed them, with his hat and shoes, within the hollow log.

"Now for a jolly shower-bath!" And, seeing an opening in the woods a little farther on, he capered towards it, laughing at the oddness of his situation, and at the feeling of the rain trickling down his bare back. A few more lightning flashes and tremendous claps of thunder, then a steady, pouring rain for about five minutes, in which Jack danced and screamed in great glee,—and the storm was over.

"What a soaking Phi and Phin must have got!" thought he. "And now won't they be surprised to see me come home in dry clothes!"

The wind had gone down before; and now a flood of silver light, like a more ethereal shower, broke upon the still woods, brightening through its arched vistas, glancing from the leaves, and glistening in countless drops from the dripping boughs. A light wind passed, and every tree seemed to shake down laughingly from its shining locks a shower of pearls. Jack was filled with a sense of wonder and joy as he walked back through the beautiful, fresh, wet woods to his hollow log. He waited only a minute or two for his skin to dry, and for the boughs to cease dripping; then put in his hand where he had left his clothes. His clothes were not there!

Jack was startled: in place of the anticipated triumph of going home in dry garments, here was a chance of his going home in no garments at all! Yet who could have taken them? how was it possible that they could have been removed during his brief absence? "Maybe this is n't the log!" He looked around. "Yes, it is, though!"

No other fallen trunk at all resembling it was to be seen in the woods. Then he stooped again, and thrust his hand as far as he could into the opening. He touched something,—not what he sought, but a mass of hair, and the leg of some large animal. He recoiled instinctively, with— it must be confessed—a start of fear.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT JACK FOUND IN THE LOG.

JACK'S first thought was, that the creature, whatever it might be, was in the log when he placed his clothes there, and that it had afterwards seized them and perhaps torn them to pieces. Then he reflected that the hair he touched felt wet; and he said, "The thing ran to its hole after I put the clothes in, and it has pushed 'em along farther into the log. Wonder what it can be!" It was evidently much too large for a raccoon or a woodchuck: could it be a panther? or a young bear? "He's got my clothes, any way! I must get him out, or go home without 'em!"

Naked and weaponless as he was, he naturally shrank from attacking the strange beast; nor was it pleasant to think of going home in his present condition. It was not at all probable that Mr. Pipkin and Phin would return to their work that afternoon; and he was too far from the house to make his cries for help heard. He resolved to call, however.

"Maybe I can make Lion hear. I wonder if he went home." He remembered that the frightened dog was last seen crouching with Phin beside the rock, and hoping he was there still, he began to call.

"Lion! here, Lion!" and, putting his fingers to his mouth, he whistled till all the woods rang. Then suddenly — for he watched the log all the while — he heard a tearing and rattling in the cavity, and saw that the beast was coming out. Stepping quickly backwards, he tripped over a stick; and the next moment the creature — big and shaggy and wet — was upon him.

"You rogue! you coward! old Lion! what a fright you gave me! what have you done with my clothes? you foolish boy's dog!" For the beast was no other than Lion himself; frightened from his retreat beside the boulder, he had followed his young master to the woods, and crept into the hollow of the log, after Jack had left his clothes in it.

Jack returned to the log, and with some difficulty fished out his garments. He unfolded them one by one, holding them up and regarding them with ludicrous dismay. Lion had made a bed of them; and between his drenched hide and the rotten wood, they had suffered no slight damage.

"O, my trousers!" Jack lamented. "And just look at that shirt! I'd better have worn them in fifty showers! So much for having a dog that's afraid of thunder!" And he gave the mischief-maker a cuff on the ear.

Jack recovered everything except one shoe, which he could not get without going considerably farther than he liked into the decayed trunk.

"Here, Lion! you must get that shoe! That's no

more than fair. Understand?" And showing the other shoe, he pointed at the hole.

In went Lion, scratching and scrambling, and presently came out again, bringing the shoe in his mouth. Encouraged by his young master's approval, and eager to atone for his cowardice and the mischief he had done, he went in again, although no other article was missing, and was presently heard pawing and pulling at something deep in the log.

"After squirrels, maybe," said Jack, as, dressing himself, he stepped aside to avoid the volleys of dirt which now and then flew out of the opening.

He thought no more of the matter, until the dog came backwards out of the hole, shook himself, and laid a curious trophy down by the shoe. Jack looked at it, and saw to his surprise that it was a metallic handle, such as he had seen used on the ends of small chests and trunks, or on bureau-drawers. He scraped off with his knife some of the rust with which it was covered, and found that it was made of brass. At the ends were short rusty screws, which, upon examination, appeared to have been recently wrenched out of a piece of damp wood.

"It's a trunk-handle," said Jack. "Lion has pulled it off. And the trunk is in the log!"

He grew quite excited over the discovery, and sent the dog in again for further particulars, while he hurriedly put on his shoes. Lion gnawed and dug for a while, and at last reappeared with a small strip of partially decayed board in his mouth.

"It's a piece of the box!" exclaimed Jack. "Try again, old fellow!"

Lion plunged once more into the opening, and immediately brought out something still more extraordinary. It was a round piece of metal, about the size of an American half-dollar; but so badly tarnished that it was a long time before Jack would believe that it was really money. He rubbed, he scraped, he turned it over, and rubbed and scraped again, then uttered a scream of delight.

"A silver half-dollar, sure as you live, old Lion!"

The dog was already in the log again. This time he brought out two more pieces of money like the first, and dropped them in Jack's hand.

"Here, Lion!" cried the excited lad. "I'm going in there myself!"

He pulled the dog away, and entered the cavity, quite regardless now of rotten wood, bugs, and "thousand-legged worms." His heels were still sticking out of the log, when his hand touched the broken end of a small trunk, and slid over a heap of coin, which had almost filled it, and run out in a little stream from the opening the dog had made.

Out came Jack again, covered with dirt, his hair tumbled over his eyes, and both hands full of half-dollars. He dashed back the stray locks with his sleeve, glanced eagerly at the coin, looked quickly around to see if there was any person in sight, then examined the contents of his hands.

"If there's no owner to this money, I'm a rich

man!" he said, with sparkling eyes. "There ain't less than a thousand dollars in that trunk!"

To a lad in his circumstances, five-and-twenty years ago, such a sum might well appear prodigious. To Jack it was an immense fortune.

"And how can there be an owner?" he reasoned. "It must have been in that log a good many years,—long enough for the trunk to begin to rot, any way. Some fellow must have stolen it and hid it there; and he'd have been back after it long ago, if he hadn't been dead,—or like enough he's in prison somewhere. Here, Lion! keep out of that!" and Jack cuffed the dog's ears, to enforce strict future obedience to that command. "Nobody must know of that log," he muttered, looking cautiously all about him again, "till I can take the money away."

But now, along with the sudden tide of his joy and hopes, a multitude of doubts rushed in upon his mind. How was he to keep his great discovery a secret until he should be ready to take advantage of it? The thief who had stolen the coin might be dead; but was it not the finder's duty to seek out the real owner and restore it to him? Already that question began to disturb the boy's conscience; but he soon forgot it in the consideration of others more immediately alarming.

"The thief may have been in prison, and he may come back this very night to find his booty! Or the owner of the land may claim it, because it was found on his premises." And Jack remembered with no

little anxiety that the land belonged to Mr. Chatford's neighbor, the stern and grasping Squire Peternot. "Or, after all," he thought, "it may be counterfeit!"

That was the most unpleasant conjecture of any. "I'll find out about that, the first thing," said Jack; and he determined to keep his discovery in the mean while a profound secret.

Accordingly, after due deliberation, he crept back into the log, and replaced the piece of the trunk, with the handle, and all the coin except one half-dollar; then, having partially stopped the opening with broken sticks and branches, he started for home.

CHAPTER III.

"TREASURE-TROVE."

TAKING a circuitous route, in order that, if he was seen emerging from the woods, it might be at a distance from the spot where his treasure was concealed, Jack came out upon the pasture, crossed it, took the lane, and soon got over the bars into the barn-yard. As he entered from one side he met Mr. Pipkin coming in from the other.

"Hullo!" he cried, with a wonderfully natural and careless air, "did ye get wet?"

"Yes, wet as a drownded rat, I did! So did Phin,—and good enough for him, by hokey!" said Mr. Pipkin. "Where've you been?"

"O, I went into the woods. Got wet, though, a little; and dirty enough,—just look at my clothes!"

"I've changed mine," remarked Mr. Pipkin. "Was n't a rag on me but what was soakin' wet. I wished I had gone to the woods."

"I'm glad ye did n't," thought Jack, as he walked on. "O," said he, turning back as if he had just thought of something to tell, "see what I found!"

"Half a dollar? ye don't say! Found it? Where, I want to know!" said Mr. Pipkin, rubbing the piece, first on his trousers, then on his boot.

"Over in the woods there,—picked it up on the ground," said Jack, who discreetly omitted to mention the fact that it had first been laid on the ground by Lion.

"That's curi's!" remarked Mr. Pipkin.

"What is it?" said Phin, making his appearance, also in dry garments. He looked at the coin, while Jack repeated the story he had just told Mr. Pipkin; then said, with a sarcastic smile, "Feel mighty smart, don't ye, with yer old half-dollar! I don't believe it's a good one." And Master Chatford sounded it on a grindstone under the shed. "Could n't ye find any more where ye found this?"

"What should I want of any more, if this is n't a good one?" replied Jack. "Here! give it back to me!"

"Tain't yours," said Phin, with a laugh, pocketing the piece, and making off with it.

"It's mine, if I don't find the owner. 'T is n't yours, any way! Phin Chatford!" — Phin started to run, giggling as if it was all a good joke, while Jack started in pursuit, very much in earnest. "Give me my money, or I'll choke it out of ye!" he cried, jumping upon the fugitive's back, midway between barn and house.

"Here, here! Boys! boys!" said a reproving voice; and Phin's father, coming out of the wood-shed, approached the scene of the scuffle. "What's the trouble, Phineas? What is it, Jack?"

"He's choking me!" squealed Phineas.

"He's got my half-dollar!" exclaimed Jack, without loosing his hold of Phin's neck.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Chatford. "No quarrelling. Have you got his half-dollar?"

"Only in fun. Besides, 't ain't his"; and Phin squalled again.

"Let go of him, Jack!" said Mr. Chatford, sternly. Jack obeyed reluctantly. "Now what is it all about?"

"I'll tell ye, deacon!" said round-shouldered Mr. Pipkin, coming forward. "It's an old half-dollar Jack found in the woods; Phin snatched it and run off with 't. Jack was arter him to git it back; he lit on him like a hawk on a June-bug; but he ha'n't begun to give him the chokin' he desarves!"

"Give me the money!" said the deacon. "No more fooling, Phineas!"

"Here's the rusty old thing! 'T ain't worth making a fuss about, any way," said Phin, contemptuously. "Ho! Jack! you don't know how to take a joke!"

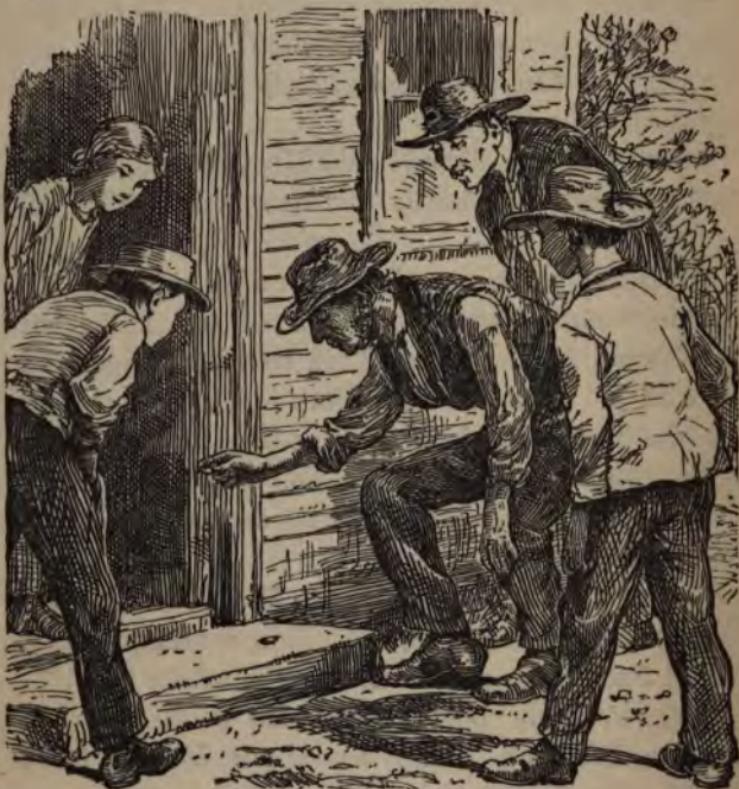
"*You do* know how to take what don't belong to you," replied Jack. "Is it a good one, Mr. Chatford? That's what I want to know."

"Yes, I guess so,—I don't know,—looks a little suspicious. Can't tell about that, though; any silver money will tarnish, exposed to the damp. I'll ring it. Sounds a little mite peculiar. Who's got a half-dollar?"

"I have!" cried Phin's little sister Kate.

In a minute her piece was brought, and Jack's was

sounded beside it on the door-stone; Jack listening with an anxious and excited look.



SOUNDING THE HALF-DOLLAR.

"No, it don't ring like the other," observed the deacon. Jack's heart sank. "Has a more leaden sound." His heart went down into his shoes. "It may be good, though, after all." It began to rise again. "We can't tell how much the rust has to do with it. Should n't wonder if any half-dollar would

ring a little dull, after it had been lying out in the woods as long as this has.” And Jack’s spirits mounted again hopefully. “I’m going over to the Basin to-night,” concluded the deacon. “I’ll take it to the watch-maker, and have him test it, if you say so.”

“I wish you would,” said Jack. “And—I’d like to know who it belongs to.”

“That’s right; of course you don’t want it if it’s a bad one, or if you can find the real owner to it.”

“I meant,” faltered Jack, — “of course I would n’t think of passing counterfeit money, and I don’t want another man’s money any how,—but—I found it on somebody’s land. Now I’d like to know if—that somebody—has any claim to it, on that account.”

“I don’t think he’d be apt to set up a claim, without he was a pretty mean man,” said the deacon.

“Not even if ’t was Squire Peternot?” said Mr. Pipkin. “Guess he’d put in for his share, if there was any chance o’ gittin’ on ’t!”

“Nonsense, Pippy! If ’t was a large sum, he might, but a trifle like this,—you’re unjust to the squire, Pippy.”

“I have n’t said it was the squire’s land. But suppose it *was*? And suppose it had been a large sum,” queried Jack, “could he claim it? What’s the law?” And, to explain away his extraordinary interest in the legal point, he added, laughingly, “Just for the fun of it, I’d like to know what he

could do if he *should* try Phin's joke, and set out to get my half-dollar away!"

"I really don't know about the law," the deacon was saying, when Lion barked. "Hist! here comes Peternot himself! Say nothing. I'll ask him. He's bringing his nephew over to see us."

"He's kind of adopted his nephew, hain't he, sence he heard of his son's death?" said Mr. Pipkin. "I've seen him hangin' around there."

"No; he only wants to get him into our school next winter."

"Ho! a schoolmaster!" whispered Phin, jeering at the new-comer. "Say, Jack! I bet we can lick him!"

"Don't look as if he had any more backbone 'n a spring chicken," was Mr. Pipkin's unfavorable criticism, as the gaunt and limping squire came to the door with his young relative.

"Good afternoon, neighbor," said the deacon, shaking hands first with the uncle, then with the nephew. "You've come just at the right time. We've a legal question to settle. Suppose Jack, here, finds a purse of money on my place; no owner turns up; now whose purse is it, Jack's or mine?"

"Your land — your hired boy — I should say, your purse," said the squire, emphatically.

"But suppose *you* find such a purse on my land?"

"H'm! that alters the case. How is it, Byron? My nephew is studying law; he can tell you better than I can about it."

Peternot thought this a good chance to bring the candidate for the winter's school into favorable notice; and the candidate for the winter's school made the most of his opportunity. He was a slender young man with a sallow complexion, a greenish eye, a pimpled forehead, and a rather awkward and studied manner of speaking. In rendering his opinion he was as prolix as any judge on the bench. He began with a disquisition on the nature of law, and finally, coming down to the case in point, said it would be considered a case of treasure-trove.

“What's that?” Jack eagerly interrupted him.

“Treasure-trove is treasure found.”

“Then why don't they say treasure found?”

“'Sh, boy!” said Mr. Chatford, good-naturedly, smiling at the youngster's impatience of long-winded sentences and large words. “What's the law of—treasure-trove, I believe you call it, Mr. Dinks?”

“I don't think there's any law on the subject,” replied the student of Blackstone, picking his teeth with a straw.

“No law! then how can such a case be decided?”

“Custom, which makes a sort of unwritten law, would here come in.”

“Well, what's the custom?”

Thereupon Mr. Byron Dinks became prolix again, speaking of English custom, which, like English law, creates precedents for our own country. The meaning of his discourse, stripped of its technical phrases and tedious repetitions, seemed to be, that formerly,

treasure-trove went to the crown ; that in more modern times it was divided — in a case like this — between the finder and the man on whose premises it was found ; but that he did n't think any precedent had been established in America.

"We're about as wise now as we were before," remarked Phin's elder brother Moses, standing in the kitchen door.

Mr. Chatford gave him a wink to remain silent, and said, "How are we to understand you, Mr. Dinks ? To use your own expression, A finds money on B's premises ; now what would be your advice to B ? "

"Supposing B is my client ? I should advise him to get possession of the money, if he could. Possession is nine points of the law."

"Well, but if he could n't get possession ? "

"Then try to compromise for one half. Then for a quarter. Then for what he could get."

"Very good. Now what would be your advice to A ? "

"A is my client ? "

"Yes, we 'll suppose so."

Spitting and throwing away his straw, Mr. Byron Dinks said with a laugh, "My advice to A would be to pocket the money and say nothing about it ; keep possession, any way ; fight for it."

"Thank you," said the deacon, with quiet irony in his tones. "Now we know what the law is on this subject, boys."

"I don't see, for my part, that it differs very much from common sense," remarked the simple-minded Mr. Pipkin, "only it takes more words to git at it."

"I'm sure," said the squire, "my nephew has given you all the law there is to govern such cases, and good advice to his clients. 'T ain't his fault if people can't understand him."

"I guess we all understand the main point, now we've got at it," said Deacon Chatford. "Hang on to your money, Jack."

"You've got it," said Jack, more deeply glad and agitated than any one suspected.

"So I have. Well, I'll tell ye when I get home from the Basin to-night whether it's good or not. Walk in, gentlemen."

And the deacon entered the house with his guests.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH JACK COUNTS HIS CHICKENS.

PETERNOT and his nephew took their departure, after making a short call. Then the family sat down to the supper-table, and the merits and prospects of the candidate for the winter's school were discussed in a manner that ought to have made his ears tingle. Then, while the boys harnessed the mare and brought her to the door, the deacon changed his clothes, and at last started for the Basin.

"Don't forget to ask about that half-dollar!" said Jack, as he held the gate open for the buggy to pass through.

"Glad you reminded me of it,—I *should* have forgotten it," replied the notoriously absent-minded deacon.

Jack wished he could have found some excuse for going with him, but he could not think of any.

"How can I wait till he gets back, to know about it?" thought he, as he stood at the gate and watched the buggy and Mr. Chatford's black hat disappear over the brow of the hill.

His reverie was interrupted by Moses, who, noticing the boy's unusual conduct,—for Jack was ordinarily no dreamer when there was work to be done,—called out to him from the stable-door, "Say,

Jack! you 've got to go and fetch the cows to-night ;
Phin says he won't."

" It's Phin's turn,—but I don't care, I 'll go." And Jack set off for the pasture, glad of this opportunity to be alone, and to muse upon his wonderful discovery.

It was a beautiful evening. The air was fresh and cool, and perfectly delicious after the shower. The sky overhead was silver-clear, but all down the gorgeous west, banks and cliffs and floating bars of cloud burned with the hues of sunset. Jack's heart expanded, as he walked up the lane ; and there, in that lovely atmosphere, he built his airy castles.

" If I *am* a rich man," thought he, " what shall I do with my money ? I 'll put it out at interest for a year or two,—I wonder how much there is ! That 'll help me get an education. Then I 'll go into business, or buy a little place somewhere, and I 'll have my horses and wagons and hired men, and—" O, what a vision of happiness floated before his eyes ! riches, honors, friendships, and in the midst of all the sweetest face in the world,—the face of his dearest friend, Mrs. Chatford's niece, Annie Felton.

Then he looked back wonderingly upon his past life. " I can hardly believe that I was nothing but a mean, ragged, swearing little canal-driver only a few months ago. Over yonder are the woods where the charcoal-burners were, that I wanted to hire out to, after I had run away from the scow,—the idea of my hiring out to them ! Now here I am, treated like

one of Mr. Chatford's own boys, and — with all that money, if it is money," he added, his heart swelling again with misgivings. "Go, Lion! go for the cows," he said; and he himself began to run, calling by the way, "Co', boss! co', boss!" as if bringing the cows would also bring Mr. Chatford home, with his report concerning the half-dollar.

"He won't be there, though, for an hour or two yet," he reflected. "What's the use of hurrying? I shall only have the longer to wait. I wonder if that log is just as I left it!" For Jack had still a secret dread lest the unknown person who had hidden the treasure so many years ago should now suddenly return and carry it away. "I'll cut over there and take just one peep," he said.

So, having started the cattle upon their homeward track, with Lion barking after the laggards, Jack leaped a fence, ran across the lot where he had been at work that afternoon with Mr. Pipkin and Phin when the shower surprised them, and was soon standing alone by the log in the darkening woods. The sticks which he had stuffed into the end of the hollow trunk were all in their place. And yet it seemed a dream to Jack, that he had actually found a box of money in that old tree,—that it was there now! He wanted to pull out the sticks and go in and make sure of his prize, but forbore to do so foolish a thing.

"Of course it's there," thought he. "And I'm going to take care that nobody knows where it is, till I've got it safe in my own possession; then who can

say whether I found it on Mr. Chatford's, or Squire Peternot's, or Aunt Patsy's land, if I don't tell? Let Squire Peternot claim it if he can!"

Yet Jack longed to tell somebody of his discovery. "O, if I could only tell Annie Felton, and get her advice about it!" But Annie, who taught the summer school, and "boarded around," was just then boarding in a distant part of the district. The next day, however, was Saturday; then she would come home to her aunt's to spend the Sunday, and he could impart to her his burning secret.

Jack stayed but a minute in the woods, then, hurrying back, rejoined Lion, who was driving the cows into the lane. Arrived at the barn-yard, he took one of three or four pails which Mr. Pipkin had brought out from the pantry, and a stool from the shed, and sat down to do his share of the milking. He had always liked that part of the day's work well enough before; but now with a secret feeling of pride and hope he said to himself, "Maybe I sha' n't always be obliged to do this for a living!" And he wondered how it would seem to be a gentleman and live without work.

CHAPTER V.

WAITING FOR THE DEACON.

THE milk was carried to the pantry and strained ; the candles were lighted, and the family sat in a pleasant circle about the kitchen table, while, without, the twilight darkened into night, and the crickets sang. There was Mr. Pipkin showing Phin how to braid a belly into his woodchuck-skin whiplash ; Mrs. Pipkin (late Miss Wansey) paring a pan of apples, which she held in her lap ; Moses reading the " Saturday Courier," a popular story-paper in those days ; little Kate, sitting on a stool, piecing a bed-quilt under her mother's eye,—sewing together squares of different colored prints cut out from old dresses, and occasionally looking up to ask the maternal advice,—while Mrs. Chatford was doing some patch-work of a different sort, which certain rents in Phin's trousers rendered necessary. Jack sat in the corner, silent, and listening for buggy-wheels.

" I hope you won't go climbing over the buckles and hames, on to a horse's back, in that harum-scarum way, another time," said the good woman, in tones of mild reproof, to her younger son.

" T was beginning to rain, and I could n't stop to think," said Phin, laughing. " Could I, Phi ? "

" I should think not, by the hurry you was in to

hook my ride," replied Mr. Pipkin, with reviving resentment. "That was a mean trick; and now jes' see how I'm payin' ye for it! Ye never could 'a' got a decent-lookin' belly into this lash, in the world, if 'twa'n't for me."

"That's 'cause you're such a good feller, and know so much!" said Phin, who could resort to flattery when anything was to be gained by it. "O, look, Mose! ain't Phi doing it splendid? It's going to be the best whiplash ever you set eyes on."

Mr. Pipkin's lips tightened in a grin around his big front teeth, and he worked harder than ever drawing the strands over the taper belly, while Phin, leaning over the back of his chair, whispered to Jack, "See what a fool I can make of him!"

At that Mrs. Pipkin, who had a keen ear and a sharp temper, flared up.

"Mr. Pipkin!"

"What, Mis' Pipkin?" — meekly.

"You've worked long enough on that whiplash. He's making fun of ye; and that's all the thanks you'll ever get for helping him. Take hold here and pare these apples while I slice 'em up."

"In a minute. I can't le' go here jes' now," said Mr. Pipkin.

Whereupon Mrs. Pipkin laid down her knife and the apple she was paring, and looked at her husband over the rim of the pan in perfect astonishment.

"Mr. Pipkin! did you hear my request?"

"Yes, I heerd ye, but —"

"Mr. Pipkin," interrupted Mrs. Pipkin, severely, "will you have the kindness to pare these apples? I don't wish to be obliged to speak again!"

"What's the apples fer,—sass?" said Mr. Pipkin, mildly.

"Pies; and you know you're as fond of pies as anybody, Mr. Pipkin."

"Wal, so I be, *your* pies. I declare, you do beat the Dutch with your apple-pies, if I do say it. There, Phin, I guess you can go along with the belly now. If it's for pies, I'll pare till the cows come hum!"

Thus disguising his obedience to his wife's request, Mr. Pipkin took the pan and the knife, and Mrs. Pipkin recovered from her astonishment.

"Jack might pare the apples and let Phi braid!" Phin complained, getting into difficulties with his whiplash. "Darn this old belly!" And he flung it across the room.

"Phineas! you shall go to bed if I hear any more such talk," said Mrs. Chatford, as sternly as it was in her kind motherly nature to speak. Then looking at Jack in the corner, "How happens it you are not reading your book to-night? It's something new for you to be idle."

"O, I don't feel much like reading to-night," said Jack, whose heart was where his treasure was.

"He's thinking about his half-dollar, waiting to know if it's a good one," sneered Phin.

"Should n't wonder if that half-dollar had dropped

out of old Daddy Cobb's money-box," remarked Mr. Pipkin, taking a slice of apple.

"Mr. Pipkin! these apples are for pies!" said Mrs. Pipkin, in a warning voice.

"Daddy Cobb's money-box! what's that?" faltered Jack, fearing he had found an owner to the coin.

"What! did n't ye never hear tell about Daddy Cobb's diggin' for a chist o' treasure? Thought everybody'd heerd o' that. There's some kind o' magic about it, hanged if I can explain jest what. The chist has a habit o' shiftin' its hidin'-place in the ground, so that though Daddy's a'most got holt on 't five or six times, it has allers slipped away from him in the most onaccountable and aggravatin' manner. He has a way o' findin' where it is, by some hocus-pocus, hazel-wands for one thing; then he goes with his party of diggers at night,—for there's two or three more fools big as him,—and they make a circle round the place, and one reads the Bible and holds the lantern while the rest dig, and if nobody speaks or does anything to break the charm, there's a chance 'at they may git the treasure. Once Daddy says they had actooally got a holt on 't,—a big, square iron chist,—but jest's they was liftin' on 't out he jammed his finger, and said 'Oh!' and by hokey! if it did n't disappear right afore their face an' eyes quicker 'n a flash o' lightnin'!"

Jack listened intently to this story. He did not believe that his treasure was the one Daddy Cobb had been digging for so long, but might it not elude his grasp in the same way?

CHAPTER VI.

“ABOUT THAT HALF-DOLLAR.”

AT every sound of wheels Jack started ; and more than once he imagined he heard a wagon stop at the gate. Still no deacon ; would he never return ? Jack watched the clock, and thought he had never seen the pointers move so slowly.

Three or four times he went to the door to listen ; and at last he walked down to the gate. It was bright, still moonlight, only the crickets and katydids were singing, and now and then an owl hooted in the woods or a raccoon cried.

“There’s a buggy coming !” exclaimed Jack. He could hear it in the distance ; he could see it dimly coming down the moonlit road. “It’s Mr. Chatford !” He knew the deacon’s peculiar “*Ca dep !*” (get up) to the horse.

“That you, Jack ?” said the deacon, driving in.

“Yes ; thought I’d come down and shut the gate after you,” replied Jack.

Mr. Chatford stopped at the house, and Jack ran to help him take out some bundles. Then the deacon drove on to the barn, and Jack hurried after him. Still not a word about the half-dollar.

“You can go into the house ; I’ll take care of Dolly,” said Jack.

"I'll help; 't won't take but a minute," said Mr. Chatford. "I've got bad news for you."

"Have you?" said Jack, with sudden faintness of heart. "What?"

"For you and Lion," added the deacon. "Duffer's got another dog. He made his brags of him to-night. Said he could whip any dog in seven counties."

"He'd better not let him tackle Lion!" said Jack.

"I told him I hoped he would n't kill sheep, as his other dog did. Take her out of the shafts; we'll run the buggy in by hand."

The broad door of the horse-barn stood open. Jack led the mare up into the bright square of moonshine which lay on the dusty floor. There the harness was quickly taken off. Not a word yet concerning the half-dollar, which Jack was ashamed to appear anxious about, and which he began to think Mr. Chatford, with characteristic absent-mindedness, had forgotten.

"By the way, I've good news for you!" suddenly exclaimed the deacon.

Jack's heart bounded. "Have you?"

"I saw Annie over at the Basin. She wants to go home to her folks to-morrow. Would you like to drive her over? She spoke of it."

"And stay till Monday?" said Jack, to whom this would indeed have been good news at another time.

"Yes; start early, and get back Monday morning in time for her to begin school. Then she won't go home again till her summer term is out."

"Maybe—I'd better—wait and go then." Jack

felt the importance of early securing his treasure, and, having set apart Sunday afternoon for that task ("a deed of necessity," he called it to his conscience), he saw no way but to postpone the long-anticipated happiness of a ride and visit with his dear friend. Yet what if the treasure were no treasure ?

"As you please," said the deacon, a little surprised at Jack's choice. "Moses will be glad enough to go. See that she has plenty of hay in the rack, and don't tie the halter so short as you do sometimes. Now give me a push here," — taking up the buggy-shafts.

"Oh!" said Jack, as if he had just thought of something, — "I was going to ask you — about that half-dollar ?"

"I did n't think on 't, said Mr. Chatford, standing and holding the shafts while Jack went behind, — "not till I'd got started for home. Then I put my hand in my pocket for something, and found your half-dollar. Help me in with the buggy, and then I'll tell you."

The deacon drew in the shafts, Jack pushed behind, and the buggy went rattling and bounding up into its place.

"Did you go back?" asked Jack, out of breath, — not altogether from the effort he had just made.

The deacon deliberately walked out of the barn, and carefully shut and fastened the door ; then, while on the way to the house, he explained.

"I had paid for my purchases out of my pocket-book, or I should have found that half-dollar before.

However, as I had promised you, I whipped about and drove back to the goldsmith's. He was just shutting up shop. I told him what I wanted. He went behind his counter, lit a lamp, looked at your half-dollar, cut into it, and then flung it into his drawer."

"Kept it!" gasped out Jack.

"Yes; 't was as good a half-dollar as ever came from the mint, he said. He gave me another in its place."

Jack could not utter a word in reply to this announcement, which, notwithstanding his utmost hopes, astonished and overjoyed him beyond measure. As soon as he had recovered a little of his breath and self-possession, he grasped the deacon's arm, and was on the point of exclaiming, "O Mr. Chatford! I have found a trunk full of just such half-dollars as that!" — for he felt that he must tell his joy to some one, and to whom else should he go? But already the deacon's other hand was on the latch of the kitchen-door, which he opened; and there sat the family round the table within.

"What is it, my boy?" said Mr. Chatford, as Jack shrank back and remained silent. "Oh! you want your half-dollar. Of course!" putting his hand into his pocket.

"I don't care anything about *that*," said Jack. He took it, nevertheless,— a bright, clean half-dollar in place of the scratched and tarnished coin he had given Mr. Chatford that afternoon.

Mr. Chatford stood holding the door open.

"Ain't you coming in?"

"No, sir, — not just yet."

Jack felt that he must be alone with his great, joyful, throbbing thoughts for a little while ; and he wandered away in the moonlit night.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW JACK WENT FOR HIS TREASURE.

IN the forenoon of the following day Annie Felton dismissed her little school half an hour earlier than she was accustomed to do, and went to her Aunt Chatford's house, to dine with her relatives and prepare for the long afternoon's ride. She was greatly surprised when told that Jack was not to accompany her.

"Did Uncle Chatford speak to him about it?" she inquired of her aunt.

"Yes, but for some reason he did n't seem inclined to go. That just suited Moses; he was glad enough of the chance."

"Jack has found a half-dollar, and it has just about turned his head," remarked Mrs. Pipkin.

"A half-dollar?" repeated Annie, wondering if such a trifle could indeed have so affected her young friend. No, she could not believe it. Then why had he willingly let slip an opportunity which she had thought he would be eager to seize?

Soon the men and boys came in to dinner,—Moses in high spirits, and with his Sunday clothes on; Jack jealous and unhappy.

"Why did n't I leave *that* till another Sunday? or get it one of these moonlight nights?" he said to

himself; and he almost cursed the money which had caused him to decline so pure and sweet a pleasure.

The manner in which Annie met him did not relieve his bitterness of heart. She was kind to him,—as indeed she always was to everybody,—but he could see plainly that she felt hurt and disappointed. Both were silent at the dinner-table; and he had no opportunity to speak a word to her privately until she came out to get into the buggy, which he had brought to the door.

“I wish I was going!” he said to her, with tears in his eyes.

“Why did n’t you wish that before?” she replied with a forgiving smile. “You could have gone.”

“Yes—only—I could n’t! I’ll tell you all about it some time. I can’t now. It’s a great secret. But don’t whisper it. I—I ought not to have said a word about it, since I’ve no chance now to tell you everything; but I could n’t bear to have you go off thinking I did n’t care for your invitation.”

O, what a beautiful look beamed upon him from her sympathizing blue eyes! She reached him her hand.

“I trust you, Jack!”

“Do you?” he cried, eagerly, a bright smile flashing through his tears.

“Good by. There comes Moses.” And Annie made room for her cousin in the buggy.

All the family came out to see them off, and Jack went to open the gate for them. Annie gave him a



"IT'S A GREAT SECRET."

smile, and moved her lips with some sweet, inaudible meaning as she passed him; but Moses, good fellow though he was, cast upon him a look of contempt, and flourished his whip, driving proudly away beside his beautiful cousin.

Jack, much as he thought of his hidden treasure, now for the first time in his life felt the utter worthlessness of money compared with the good-will and

companionship of those we love,— a truth which it takes some of us all our lives to discover.

The sight of Annie Felton always stirred the nobler part of his nature ; and now, going back to the house, he began to blame himself for having taken hitherto a purely selfish view of his treasure.

“ All I ‘ve thought of has been just the good it was going to do *me!* ” And he said to himself that he did n’t deserve the good fortune that had befallen him. Now to bestow it all upon her he felt would be his greatest happiness.

“ And give some to you, precious little Kate ! ” was his second thought, as the gay little creature came running with Lion to meet him. In like manner his benevolence overflowed to all,— even to sharp-tongued Mrs. Pipkin,— after Annie Felton had stirred the fountain.

Twenty-four hours seemed long to wait. But the time for securing his treasure at last came round. He walked to church in the morning with Phin and Mr. Pipkin, but, without saying a word to anybody of his intentions, he at noon came home alone across the fields. He found, as he expected, Mrs. Chatford keeping house.

“ Why, Jack ! ” said she, “ why did n’t you stay to Sunday school and the afternoon services ? ”

“ Don’t you want to go this afternoon ? ” replied Jack, evasively. “ There will be some of the neighbors riding by, who will carry you. I’ll take care of the house.”

" You are very kind to think of me," she said.
" But I don't think of going. You'd better eat your luncheon, and go right back."

Jack longed to tell her everything on the spot, but feared she might disapprove of his going to bring home the treasure on the Sabbath. " After all's over, then she'll say I did right," thought he. So he remarked, carelessly, " There's a new minister to-day; I don't like him very well. I guess I'll go over and see Aunt Patsy a little while this afternoon."

" If you do, I'll send a loaf of bread and one of the pies we baked yesterday," said Mrs. Chatford.

This was what Jack expected ; and it gave him an excuse for carrying a basket. He took off his Sunday clothes, putting on an every-day suit in their place, lunched, and soon after started with Lion. He made a brief visit to the poor woman, and then set out for home by way of the woods.

On the edge of Aunt Patsy's wood-lot he paused and looked carefully all about him. Not a human being was in sight. A Sabbath stillness reigned over all the sunlit fields and shadowy woods. There were Squire Peternot's cattle feeding quietly in the pasture. A hawk was sailing silently high overhead. As he turned and walked on, two or three squirrels, gray and black, ran along the ground, disappearing around the trunks of trees to reappear in the rustling tops, and it was all he could do to keep Lion still.

" Look here, old fellow ! " said he, " remember, you are not to bark to-day ! "

From Aunt Patsy's wood-lot he entered the squire's, stepping over a dilapidated fence of poles and brush. The snapping of the decayed branches broke the silence; then, as he listened, he heard, far off, the bells for the afternoon service begin to ring. It was a strange sound, in that wildwood solitude, so shadowy and cool, and full of the fresh odors of moss and fern.

The bells were still ringing, and their faint, slow, solemn toll filled Jack's heart with an indefinable feeling of guilt as he reached the log where his treasure was, and reflected upon the very worldly business that brought him there.

He did not reflect long,—he was too eager for the exciting work before him. Having walked on to the farther edge of the woods, to see that nobody was approaching from that direction, he returned, and began to pull out the sticks which he had stuffed into the end of the log.

"Everything's just as I left it, so far," thought he. "Wonder if my money-chest will dodge a fellow, like old Daddy Cobb's!"

The opening clear, he put on an old brown frock which he had brought in the basket, laid his hat and coat on the ground, told Lion to watch them, and entered the log headforemost. The treasure, too, was where he had left it. His body stopped the cavity so that he could see nothing in its depths, but his groping hand felt the little trunk and the coin that had fallen out of its broken end.

"I'll take this loose money out of the way first," thought he; "then maybe I can move the trunk."

He had nothing but his pockets to put the coin into, and those his frock covered. "I'll find something better," thought he. Backing out of the log, he pulled off his shoes, and re-entered with one of them in his hand. This he filled with all the half-dollars he could find about the end of the trunk, which he then tried to move.

"It's stuck in a heap of rotten stuff here," he muttered, "and I shall break it more if I pull hard on it." So he resolved to empty it where it was.

He was half-way out of the log, bringing after him his shoe freighted with coin, when he was startled by a sudden bark from Lion. Leaving his shoe, he tumbled himself out upon the ground in fearful haste, to find a stray calf in the bushes the innocent cause of alarm. For keeping guard too faithfully poor Lion got a box on the ear.

After waiting awhile, to see if anything more dangerous than the calf was nigh, Jack brought out his shoe, poured its rattling contents into the basket, which he covered with his coat, and then went back into the log. This time he took both shoes in with him, which he filled, and emptied one after the other into the basket. Another journey, another, and still another, and he began to think there was more coin than he could carry home.

"I can get it away from here, though, so nobody can tell on whose land I found it," — which he seemed

to think a very important point to gain. "I'll leave the little trunk where it is,—only take out the money."

He had gone into the log for the last time, and got the last of the money, filling both shoes quite full, and was bringing them out with him,—he had actually got them out, leaving one at the entrance to the opening, and holding the other in his hands,—when Lion, notwithstanding his previous punishment, uttered a very low, suppressed growl.

Jack looked up from under his tumbled hair, and there, not three yards distant, with his horn-headed cane, regarding with grim amazement the boy and his shoes full of coin, stood Squire Peternot!

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK AND THE SQUIRE.

FEARING a raid upon his melon-patch, which bad boys in the neighborhood were beginning to molest, the squire had stayed at home to watch it that Sunday afternoon. He had seen Jack with his dog and basket cross the fields, go to Aunt Patsy's house, and afterwards enter the woods ; and, feeling the interest of a stern moral censor in the conduct of all Sabbath-breaking boys, he had followed him to the hollow log. Lion's indiscreet barking had at first served to guide him to the spot ; and afterwards his equally unfortunate silence, in consequence of the punishment he had suffered for that offence, favored the old man's stealthy approach.

To have the faintest idea of the emotions that agitated the squire at sight of Jack and the shoes full of coin, — the wrath, the surprise, the avarice, — one must have seen him as he stood there, or have heard Jack (as I have heard him many times) describe the grim and frowning figure that met his eyes.

“ What's this, what's this, eh ? ” cried Peternot, taking a stride forwards. “ Money ! on my land ! ” and the gray eyes glittered. “ Ha ! ha ! This, then, is the meaning of all that talk about *treasure-trove* the other day ! ”



"BOY ! ARE YOU A ROBBER ?"

Jack felt so stunned for the moment that he did not attempt to speak, or even to rise. He sat on the ground, guarding his shoes, keeping one hand on the rim of the basket and looking up steadily at the squire with eyes full of mingled fear and defiance.

"So, so ! What have you got in your basket ?" And the stiff-jointed old man stooped to remove the coat which Jack had taken the precaution to spread over it each time when he entered the log.

"Here! you just leave that alone!" exclaimed Jack, while Lion gave a fierce growl. The squire dropped the garment instantly, but he had pulled it far enough from the basket to expose its surprising contents.

"Boy!" said he, in still greater amazement, "are you a robber?"

"Like enough I am," muttered Jack, quite willing that he should take that view of the case.

"Boy!" repeated Peterminot, with awful severity, "you've stolen this money, and it's my duty to have you arrested. I am a justice of the peace." Jack changed countenance at that.

"I've stolen it about as much as I stole Mr. Chatford's horse and buggy once, which you were so sure of, when they were all the while standing under the shed at the Basin, just where Mr. Chatford left them."

"Then how did you come by so much money?"

"If you must know, I found it in this log," said Jack, with a sudden determination to tell the plain truth, and stand or fall by it.

"How do I know but what you stole it and hid it here, so you could pretend you'd found it?"

Jack was glad now that he had not removed the trunk.

"If you can't see by the look of this silver that it's been hid away here longer than I've been in the town," he replied, "you can just go into the log and find the trunk, that you'll say has been there about as many years as I am old, that's all!"

"Is there any more money in there?"

Jack was willing the squire should think there might be, nor was he sure there were not a few pieces in the rubbish about the trunk; so he said, "It belongs to me, if there is."

"Belongs to you? You little scapegrace! By what right?"

"It belongs to me,—that is," added Jack, "if the real owner does n't turn up,—because I found it."

"Found it, on my land! You have n't got it off from my land yet, and I forbid your taking it off. What's left in the log you have n't even had in your possession. I want nothing but what's my own by a plain interpretation of law; but the law's with me in this. If you had once fairly got the coin away without my knowledge, there might have been some question about it; but that you've been caught trespassing, and that you've no right to take anything from my premises in my presence and against my express orders, is common sense as well as common law."

Fire and tears rushed into poor Jack's eyes.

"And do you mean to say you'll take all this money away from me?"

"Sartin, I do, since it don't belong to you, not a dollar on 't. I'll make ye a reasonable reward, however, if you give it up without making me any unnecessary trouble."

"What do you call a reasonable reward? Half?"

"Half! of all that money!" exclaimed the squire,

in huge astonishment. "Preposterous! I'll give ye more than liberal pay for your trouble. I'll give ye five dollars."

Thereupon grief and fury and fierce contempt burst from the soul of Jack. All the softening influences which had been at work upon him for the past few months were forgotten in a moment; he was the vicious, desperate, profane little canal-driver once more. Looking up through tears of rage at the startled squire, he shouted, "Go to thunder, you hoary old villain!" and followed up this charge with a volley of blasphemy and abuse, which lasted for at least a minute. By that time the squire had recovered his self-possession; so, in a measure, had Jack; and the hurricane of passion that had swept everything before it was followed by a lull of sullen hate and despair.

"That's the kind of boy you are, is it? after all your living among Christian people!" said the old man, with a sort of grim satisfaction.

"It's the kind of boy I was, and it's the kind of boy such Christians as you are will make me again, if I let you!" said Jack, kindling once more. "I didn't mean to swear, but I forgot myself. I have n't before, since the first Sunday after I came off from the canal. That's because I *have* been living among Christians,—people who try to encourage a fellow and help him, by bringing out the good that's in him, instead of grinding him down, and keeping him down, by telling him how bad he's always been

and always will be,—like the kind of Christian *you* are!"

"Talk to me about being a Christian, you profane Sabbath-breaker!" said Peternot, choking with indignation.

"A Sabbath-breaker, am I? And what are you? I own up to what brought me here to-day, but what brought *you* here? What keeps you here? Why ain't you at church? Guess you consider your worldly interests worth looking after a little, if '*t is Sunday,—don't you?*'"

"Come, come, boy! that kind of talk won't help matters."

"Then le's stop it," said Jack. "But if you come here on Sunday and try to get my money away from me, and accuse me of Sabbath-breaking because I mean to keep it, I shall have just a word to say back, you better believe!" And, still sitting on the ground, Jack held his shoes between his legs, and guarded one side of the basket, while Lion guarded the other.

"What do you want of so much money,—a boy like you?" said the squire, adopting a more conciliatory tone.

"What do you want of it,—a man like you? without a child in the world, since you drove your only son away from home by your hard treatment, and he died a drunkard and a gambler!"

The old man fairly staggered backward at this cruel blow, and uttered a suppressed groan.

"It was mean in me to say that," added Jack,

relenting ; "I did n't mean to ; but you drove me to it. What do you want of more money than you 've got already ?—that's what I meant to ask. You're a rich man now. You 've ten times as much as you need ; what do you want of more ? To carry into the next world with ye ? one would think so,—an old man like you !"

"Boy!" said the trembling Peternot, "you don't know what you're talking about!"

"Yes, I do ; I 'm talking just what a good many other folks talk, only not to your face. They say, 'There 's old Squire Peternot, seventy years old, with one foot almost in the grave,—rich enough in all conscience,—don't use even the interest on what money he has, but lays it up, lays it up,—lives meanly as the poorest farmer in town,—never gives a dollar, except when he can't help it, and then you 'd think it hurt him like pulling his teeth,—and yet there he is, trying to get Aunt Patsy's little house and lot away from her,—making tight bargains, screwing his workmen's wages down to the lowest notch' ; that's what I 've heard, every word of it, and you know that every word of it is true !'"

"I have my own ideas about property," said the squire ; "and no man—no prudent man—likes to squander what 's his own."

"And so you, with all your wealth, come and grab this money, which is all I have in the world, and offer me five dollars to give it up to you ! You *are* a prudent man ! I say squander !"

"I'll give you twenty dollars of it,—and that's liberal, I'm sure," said Peternot, a good deal shaken by what Jack had said, but unable, from long habit, to take his hand from any worldly goods that it chanced to cover.

"Twenty dollars!" laughed Jack, with scornful defiance. "I don't make bargains on Sunday."

This cool sarcasm caused the worthy Peternot to wince as at the taste of some bitter medicine. "I don't bargain on the Lord's day, neither. But I see the necessity of coming to some sort of terms with you."

"Very well; then you just walk off and leave me and my dog to take care of this money; those are the only terms you can come to with me."

"But what do you propose to do, if I don't walk off?"

"Stay here,—Lion and I,—and hang on to our *treasure-trove*. Your nephew, who knows so much about law, advised me to keep possession,—to fight for it,—and I will."

"And do you think I'm going to give up to you, you renegade?" cried the squire. He moved to lay his hand on the basket; but there was something in Lion's growl he didn't like. "I'll beat that beast's brains out, if he offers to touch me!" he exclaimed, grasping his cane menacingly.

"I advise you not to try that little thing," said Jack. "If you should miss your stroke, where would you be the next minute?"

The squire thought of that. His tone changed slightly.

"I don't leave this spot till I git possession of that money!"

"All right, Squire. Sit down,—you'd better. You'll have some time to stop, I guess. Have a peach?" And the audacious little wretch took one out of his coat-pocket. "We shall need refreshments before we get through!" As Peternot indignantly declined the proffered fruit, Jack quietly broke it open, and ate, with a relish, the rich yellow pulp. The old man accepted the invitation to sit down, however, and reposed his stiff old limbs on the end of the hollow log, not clearly foreseeing how this little adventure was to end.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SQUIRE'S PERPLEXITY AND JACK'S STRATAGEM.

A LITTLE calm reflection opened the squire's mind to a ray of light which would certainly have dawned upon it before, had not his wits been clouded by passion. "Boy!" he suddenly exclaimed, "I believe every dollar of that money is bogus."

"Then what's the use of making a row over it?" was the boy's cool retort.

"It's the business of a magistrate to look after counterfeiters and counterfeit money," said Peternot. But at the same time he thought, "*He* has satisfied himself that it *ain't* counterfeit; his whole conduct shows it." And the avaricious old man still laid siege to the basket.

Half an hour passed, during which time very little was said. Jack took out his knife and began to whittle a stick; perhaps he was not unwilling to show the squire that he was armed. He also put on his coat, and then his shoes, after emptying their contents into the basket.

Peternot grew more and more impatient, as he saw the afternoon gliding away. Another half-hour, and the situation still remained unchanged. "I may set here till night," thought he, "and all night, and all day to-morrow, fur's I know,—but what's the use?

He'll stick as long as I do. He's tough; he can stand anything; ye can't starve a canal-driver. Sakes!" he exclaimed, half aloud, suddenly putting his hand into his pocket, remembering that the key of his kitchen door was there.

On leaving home he had carefully made fast all the doors and windows of his house,—his wife and nephew having gone to meeting that afternoon; and now, should they return before he did, they would find themselves locked out!

Still the old man's cupidity would not suffer him to raise the siege.

He was taken by a fit of coughing; and, fearing to catch cold by sitting on the damp log, he got up and walked about,—frowning and striking his cane upon the ground in huge dissatisfaction and disgust. "You're the most obstinate, unreasonable boy I ever see!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Am I?" laughed Jack. "You have n't begun to see how obstinate I am. Wonder what you'll think to-morrow at this time? or the next day?" And what, he might have added, would the wife and nephew think?

"Hush!" whispered the old man. "What boys are those?"

There was a crackling of sticks in a not very distant part of the woods, occasioned by a gang of four or five boys climbing Peternot's brush fence. Jack jumped upon the log and looked.

"It's the Huswick tribe," said he. "There's

Dock, there's Hank, there's Cub,—there they all are, going over your fence like a flock of sheep!"

"The Huswicks, Cub and Dock,—Hank with 'em!" ejaculated the squire, in great excitement. "They're the wust set of boys in town!"

"Yes, and they're putting straight towards your house," observed Jack.

"They're after my melons!" said Peternot, brandishing his cane. "The rogues! I'll larn 'em!" With a limping stride he started in pursuit, but turned back immediately. "Promise me you'll stay here!"

Jack could n't help laughing at the old man's simplicity. "Do you think I'm such a fool as to make that promise? Or even if I should, would you trust me to keep it? Come!" cried Jack, "you must have a better opinion of me than you pretend."

"I know you have some good traits—the rogues will destroy all my melons—if I could borrow your dog—leave your basket and go with me—we'll settle our diffikilty when we come back," said the agitated squire.

"I'll take care of my basket; you can look after your melons," retorted Jack.

"I'd as lives have a passel o' pigs in my melon-patch!" cried Peternot, striding to and fro. "Boy! I'm sure this money is bogus!—I wish I had called to 'em 'fore they got out o' hearin'!"

"Why did n't ye?" asked Jack.

"That might 'a' led 'em to come here, and we don't

want anybody by the name o' Huswick to have a hand in this business. But my melons!—Boy, be reasonable!"

"Be reasonable yourself, Squire Peternot! You're sure this money is bogus; then why don't you leave it and go for your melons?"

"I *ain't* sure," replied the squire. "But *you're* sure it's good money; I see that, and *you're* no fool."

"Thank ye, sir," said Jack, politely. And, seeing that the old man's cupidity made him ready to believe almost anything, he added, "Now look here! If I'll give you what money there is in the basket, will you be satisfied?"

Peternot started. "Satisfied? Sartin—I can't tell—explain!"

"Will you take this, and leave me what there is still in the log? That's what I mean," said Jack, with an air of candor.

Peternot, astonished by this strange proposition, but afraid of being cheated out of a few dollars, asked, "How much is there in the log?" at the same time stooping with difficulty and peeping into the cavity.

"That's my risk. Come, is it a bargain?"

"I thought you did n't make bargains on the Sabbath-day!"

"Well, I don't," laughed Jack, "unless some good man sets me the example. I'm only a boy,—it's easy to corrupt me."

"Corrupt you! you sassy, profane—"

" Sabbath-breaker," suggested Jack, as Peternot hesitated for a word bad enough. " What do you say to my offer ? "

" I say, if there 's money in the log, it belongs to me, the same as this belongs to me." And the squire, impressed by the importance of having some accurate knowledge on that point, vigorously thrust in his cane.

" Your stick can't give ye much information," said Jack. " You 'll have to go in yourself."

" I 'm going in myself!" exclaimed the squire, sharply. " Move out of my way here."

Jack readily made room for him, tickled to the heart's core at the thought of the stiff-jointed old man's going into the log.

" Grin, will ye ?" said Peternot. " I s'pose you think the minute I 'm in there you 'll start to run with your basket. But you can't run fur with that weight to carry ; I shall ketch ye !"

He leaned his cane by the log, laid his hat beside it, and put his head and one arm into the cavity. Then he put in his shoulders and both arms. " I can hear ye, if ye stir to move !" he cried from the hollow depths, which muffled his voice ; and in his body went, leaving only the long Peternot legs sticking out.

Jack was convulsed with laughter. But all at once the idea occurred to him that practical advantage might be taken of the squire's ludicrous situation. Up he jumped, and seizing the largest of the sticks with which he had previously stopped the mouth of the log, began to thrust them in after the squire.

"Here! oh! oh! murder!" cried the voice, now more muffled than ever, while the old man struggled violently to get out. "Oh! oh!"

"Good by!" screamed Jack, holding him, and thrusting in more sticks. "You may have what's in the log, and I'll take the basket."



PETERNOT IN THE HOLLOW LOG.

"Help! ho! I'm killed!" said the voice, growing fainter and fainter.

"And buried!" Jack yelled back, laughing with wild excitement. "But you kick well, for all that!" And in went more rubbish about the old man's heels. "How do ye like your bargain? You'll have plenty of time to count your dollars before I send Pipkin over to help you out."

And, having got the old man wedged so tightly into the log that he could not even kick, Jack, inspired with extraordinary strength for the occasion, caught up his basket of coin and started to run, followed by Lion.

CHAPTER X.

“THE HUSWICK TRIBE.”

RUNNING quickly behind walls and fences, the Huswick boys made a rapid raid upon Peternot's melon-patch, and left it loaded with spoils.

“Say, Dock !” said Hank (nickname for Henry), skulking behind some bushes, “le's put for Chatsford's orchard, and scatter rines by the way, so if we're tracked the old man 'll think 't was the deacon's boys hooked his melons.”

“Go ahead !” said Dock (nickname for Jehoshaphat), carrying two fine ripe melons on his left arm while he dug into one of them with a jack-knife in his right hand. “Stoop, and keep clus to the fence !”

“No danger, old man's gone to meetin',” said Cub, whose real name was Richard,—his odd shape (he was ludicrously short and fat) having probably suggested the nickname.

“Me an' Cub can go without stoopin',” giggled Hod, the youngest (christened Horace). “See Hank ! he looks like a well-sweep !”

And indeed the second of the boys, who was as wonderfully tall and lank as Cub was short and thick, bore no slight resemblance to that ornament of country door-yards.

“Hanged if one o' mine ain't a green one !” ex-

claimed Tug (short for Dwight), dashing to the ground a large watermelon, the sight of which in ruins would have made old Peternot's heart ache.

"Guess we made a clean sweep of all the ripe ones," said Cub. "No, you don't!" as Tug offered to relieve him of one of his three. "I never had my fill o' melons yit, though I've"—cramming his mouth while he continued to talk—"been in the squire's patch much as once afore now."

"You never had your fill of anything, I believe, Cub!" said Hod, with his usual giggle. "Remember when we went there in the night last year?"

"Night's no time to go for melons," said Cub. "Ye can't tell a ripe one 'thout cuttin' into 't."

"Yes, ye can," said Tug; "smell on 't. That's the best way to tell a mushmelon."

"Cub's terrible petic'lar about slashin' the ol' man's whoppers, all to once," said Horace.

"Of course, for if we cut a green one we sha'n't find it ripe next time we go," Cub explained. "Jest look! we're makin' a string o' rines all the way from Peternot's to the deacon's orchard!"

"There now, boys," said Hank, "throw what rines ye got down here by the brook, an' stop eatin' till we git to the woods."

Their course had been westward, until they reached the orchard. They now took the line of stone-wall which divided the squire's land from the deacon's, and which led northward to the corner of Peternot's wood-lot,—Hank following Dock, Cub following

Hank, Tug after Cub, and Hod bringing up the rear. In this order they entered the woods, and were hastening to find a secluded spot where they could sit and enjoy their melons, when suddenly Dock stopped.

"Thought I heard somebody," he said to Hank, coming up.

"So did I. Lay low, boys! Git behind this log!"

Down went boys and melons in a heap, each of the brothers, as he arrived, tumbling himself and his load with the rest. There they lay, only Hank's long, crane-like neck being stretched up over the log to reconnoitre; but presently even he thought it time to duck, and threw himself flat upon the ground with the rest.

"Keep dark!" he whispered; "it's that Jack Hazard, that lives to the deacon's! him an' his big dog!"

Jack indeed it was, who had been too intently occupied in fastening Peternot into the log to notice the approach of the Huswick boys. He had thought of them, to be sure, but had supposed they would return through the woods as they went.

He was now running as fast as he could with his basket of treasure, directing his course towards the orchard, but keeping a little to the right in order to reach a low length of fence, over which he intended to climb, and then betake himself to the smoother ground of the pasture. A log lay in his way. Lion, growling, drew back from it — too late. Jack, in his

headlong haste, sprang upon it, and leaped down on the other side, alighting on a frightful heap of legs and heads and watermelons. He jumped on Hank, tripped against Cub, and, falling, spilt his basket of rattling coin all over Tug and Dock and Hod. Thereupon the heap rose up as one man, astonishing poor Jack much as if he had stumbled upon a band of Indians lying in ambush.

“What in thunder!—Jerushy mighty!—half-dollars!” ejaculated Cub and Dock and Tug; while Hank stretched himself up to his full height, and Hod fell vindictively upon Jack.

“Le’ me go!” screamed Jack, taking his knee out of a muskmelon, and shaking off his assailant.

“That’s my melon,” said Hod, diving at him again furiously, “an’ you’ve smashed it!”

He was butting and striking with blind rage, when Lion bounced upon him, and actually had him by the collar of his coat, dragging and shaking him with terrible growls, when Tug and Cub and Dock — one catching Hod by the heels, one Jack, and the other Lion — disentangled the combatants.

“Where j’e git all this money?” demanded Cub.

“Found it, and I’m carrying it home,” said Jack, scrambling to pick up his scattered half-dollars.

“He’s murdered somebody for it!” cried Hank, peering in the direction of the hollow log. “I heered him! Hold on to him, boys!” and he ran to make discoveries.

“Don’t ye do that!” said Jack, as Hod rushed to

help him pick up the coin. "My dog will have hold of ye again! Watch, Lion!"

"Take that out o' yer pocket, Hod!" said Cub, seizing his youngest brother by the neck. "Melons is fair game, but now ye're stealin'. None o' that while I'm around!"

Hank, meanwhile, had reached the hollow log, beside which the hat and cane were; when, hearing groans from within and seeing a pair of legs sticking out, he began at once to remove the rubbish from the opening. Dock and Tug went to his assistance; and, each laying hold of a leg while Hank pulled energetically at the coat-tail, poor old Peternot, half smothered, fearfully rumpled, and frightfully cross, was hauled out by the heels horizontally.

CHAPTER XI.

THE "COURT" AND THE "VERDICT."

WHEN at length the squire stood upon the legs he had been drawn out by, and found himself in the presence of the Huswick boys, the recognition and pleasure were mutual.

"You scoundrels!" he began, brushing the dirt from his clothes and hair.

"What are we scoundrels fer?" said Hank, the tall one, with a comical grin on his thin, sinewy features. "Fer snakin' ye out of the log?"

"If ye ain't satisfied, we can pack ye in agin," suggested Dock. But Peternot did not seem to take that view of the matter.

"How come ye in there, anyhow?" said Tug. "Was he murderin' on ye?"

"Yes! Where is the villain? He's got my money!" And away limped the old man in pursuit of the youthful robber and assassin.

"Them melons!" whispered Tug.

"Can't help it now," muttered Dock. "Hank, I wish you'd left the old fox in his hole!"

Guided by the sound of voices, and the sight of a head or two between the standing trunks, Peternot marched straight to the log behind which Jack was busy picking up his half-dollars. There were Cub

and Hod watching him, while Lion watched them; there also were the stolen melons,—an interesting sight to the angry squire.

"Hullo, boys!" said Hank, leaning over the log, with one foot upon it, "where did them melons come from?"

"Do'no'," replied Cub. "They was here when we come,—wa'n't they, Hod?"

"Them melons come from my garden, and they come by your hands!" exclaimed Peternot. "I know it! and I'll have ye up for trespassin', the hull coboodle of ye!"

"Look here, squire!" said Hank, "seems to me you're a little mite hasty. You ought to know your friends better'n all that. Where'd you be now, if 't wa'n't for us? In that 'ere hole. And where'll ye be agin in less'n no time, if ye ain't plaguy careful? In that 'ere hole!"

"He says you was murderin' on him, Jack," observed Tug.

"That's a likely story!" cried the excited Jack, who by this time had got his half-dollars all back into the basket again. "Could I put him into the log? He was *in* the log,—he was robbing *me*,—so I fastened him in and got away,—or I *should* have got away, if I had n't stumbled over you fellows. Now just help me home with this money, and I'll pay you well."

"Help him at your peril!" said Peternot. Then, seeing the importance of securing such powerful

allies, he added, "Maybe I was hasty, boys. Help me home with *my* money, and I'll say nothin' about the melons."

"That's fair, if it's your money," said Hank. "Seems to be a dispute about it. Guess we'll try the case. Come, now,—you fust, squire,—give in yer evidence whilst the court refreshes himself with a melon or two."

So saying, Hank coolly reached over and stuck his knife into a watermelon, which he proceeded to eat, sitting on the log. "Take holt, boys," he said, "this is lickin' good,—wonder whose patch it come from! Yours, did ye say, squire? Guess I shall have to pay ye a visit some time. No, no, Jack! set down that basket! ye can't leave the court with the damages 'fore the case is decided. Wal, seein' the old man hain't found his tongue yit, we'll hear *your* testimony."

Peternot was, in fact, so choked with wrath at the sight of the five Huswick boys—for all the others had duly followed Hank's example—sitting comfortably on the log, regaling themselves with his melons, that he could not have spoken without doing his cause great injury; and thus it happened that Jack was first heard.

"Now put your hand on this watermelon an' swear 't you'll tell the truth, the hull truth, and nothin' but the truth," said Hank, who had more than once seen the inside of a court-room,—perhaps unwillingly; and he handed Jack a slice of melon,

which the poor fellow took with a grin and ate. "Now answer me; an' don't ye try to tell too much; for though they alluz make a chap swear to tell the *hull* truth, they never let him, but shet his mouth dumb quick if he goes to let out more'n they ask fer. Now." (Hank took a bite of melon.) "What's yer name?"

"Jack Hazard."

"Ockepeation?"

"I work for Mr. Chatford."

"What did ye do 'fore that?" (Another bite.)

"I drove on the canal, for Captain Berrick."

"How did ye happen to leave him?"

"He flung me into the canal twice in one day, which I thought was once too often, and I run away from him."

"Poor boy?" (Hank dug into his melon again.)

"Yes; I never had anything,—I never had even a chance for myself till now."

"Take another slice," said Hank. "Now you've got a chance for yourself?"

"I thought I had; but this old man here comes down on me, and claims the money which I found in that hollow log." And Jack, with the indulgence of the august court,—holding his second slice of melon in his hand,—poured forth his story.

"Now what have you got to say to all that?" said Hank, turning to the squire. "Have a bite? ye better," holding out a piece of melon on the blade of his jack-knife.

Peternot declined to regale himself, and made answer: "I say what I've said to him,—the money (if 't is money, though in all probability it's bogus) was found on my premises, it has not been taken from my premises, and I forbid his takin' it. But I've offered him a liberal reward for findin' on 't, and I offer it again."

"Squire," said Hank, "you're a fair man, an' I must say your melons are excellent. What do ye think, boys?"

Now the boys were unanimously of the opinion (with the exception of Hod) that the coin was spurious, and consequently good for nothing but to help them make their peace with Peternot. Jack saw them winking at each other, and knew their thoughts.

"You sha'n't take it away from me!" he cried, throwing himself upon the basket. "I'll die first! and you'll have to kill my dog! O, I wish Mr. Chatford was here!"

"That's the most sensible idee yit," said Dock. "Boys, we don't want to mix up with this business, only to see fair play. Better let the deacon settle it. He's hum from meetin' by this time. Go fer him, Bub; I'll take care of your basket."

"Will you! Won't you let him have it? nor take it yourselves?"

"What should we take it fer? We've no claim on 't, anyhow," said Hank, who might, however, have thought and acted differently if he had believed the

coin genuine. "Put, now! If I'm alive, the basket shall stay till you come back."

"Besides, you can leave your dog," said Cub. "He'll watch your interest, while the squire'll watch hisn. Be quick, for we can't stay much longer 'n it'll take to finish our melons."

Notwithstanding his anxious doubts, Jack was persuaded that the best thing he could do was to run in all haste for the deacon, leaving Lion, Peternot, and the Huswick boys to watch each other and take care of the treasure in his absence.

"We'll keep our word about the basket," said Hank, with a droll look, as Jack disappeared over the fence; "but about the stuff that's in 't, this is the judgment of the court,—we allow 't the squire's claim is just, an' give him the money, pervided he'll say nothin' 'bout the melons, but pay us a dollar apiece for helpin' him carry it hum."

"But we've engaged 't the basket shall stay till he comes back," Cub objected.

"An' whatever else we do, we're fellers that keeps our word," added Dock, over his melon.

"Then how's the coin to go?" demanded the exasperated squire, thinking the boys meant to dally with him until Mr. Chatford's arrival.

"You don't know nothin' 'bout war,—you never see a one-hoss wagon!" said Dock, contemptuously. "Hod, off with yer breeches!"

Hod naturally objected, on strong personal grounds,

to this part of the arrangement. He started to run, but Tug headed him off, and Cub seized him; when, finding that, with or without his consent, he was destined to part with the required garment for a season, the lamb of the flock yielded, and kicked off that portion of his fleece.

Cub took the trousers, and quickly turned the legs into a pair of bags by tying cords about the ankles. "Now bring on yer grist," said he; "I 'll hold the sack open!"

"Plague on the dog!" said Tug. "He won't le' me tech it."

"I can coax him. Here, poor fellow!" said Cub, patting him.

Lion did not greatly resent the patting, but the moment Cub's hand reached for the basket, a deep growl warned him off.

"Kill the brute!" cried Peternot. "We can't be bothered this way."

"That's easy enough, if you'll pay damages," said Dock.

"That I 'll do,—a miser'ble cur that stan's in the way o' my takin' my own, on my own premises!"

"Kill him it is, then," said Dock, looking for a club, and finding two. "Hank, you take this. Cub, you take your dirk-knife. Squire, lend Tug your cane, or use it yourself."

"Now see here!" objected Hank. "This looks to me kind o' mean,—half a dozen on us agin one dog!"

Hanged if I don't like the looks o' the pup, an' I won't have him killed."

"What'll ye do, then?"

"I'll show ye."

Lion was standing near the log, on the other side of which Hank placed himself.

"Now pretend you're goin' to grab the basket!"

CHAPTER XII.

HOW HOD'S TROUSERS WENT TO THE SQUIRE'S HOUSE.

HANK leaned over the log,—his lank frame and astonishing length of limb favoring the execution of his stratagem,—and seized Lion by one of his hind legs while his attention was diverted by a feigned attack upon the treasure. Finding himself caught, the dog wheeled furiously; but on the instant Hank, swinging his hind-quarters upon the log, drew them between two prongs of an upright limb, forked near the trunk, where it was easy to hold him, with his head hanging.

“Now who’s got a good stout string?”

“Here’s a whiplash in Hod’s breeches pocket!”

Tug leaped the log with it, and assisted in lashing Lion’s hind legs to the limb, below the fork in which he was suspended by his thighs. The poor fellow’s struggling and yelping were of no avail: there he was, hung.

Meanwhile Cub held his pair of bags open, and the coin was emptied into them. The squire stooped with many a groan to pick up the scattered pieces that rolled on the ground. Then the well-freighted trousers were set astride Hank’s lofty neck; at which he began to prance and kick up, in playful imitation

of a colt—or should we say a giraffe?—with a strange rider.

"Now ye need n't but one of ye go with me," said Peternot; "or at the most two."

"Two can't carry all that silver," said Cub. "We must all help. And edge along towards Aunt Patsy's wood-lot, if ye don't want to meet Jack and the deacon. Comin', Hod?"

"I can't without my breeches!" replied the discontented youth.

In no very pleasant mood he saw his trousers ride off on Hank's shoulders,—still visible above the undergrowth after the squire and the rest of his odd escort had disappeared from view. So great indeed was Hod's chagrin at being left behind in this way, that he found it necessary at once to set himself about some sort of mischief. First he broke open the best of the remaining melons, and ate as much as he could of them. Then he gathered up all the rinds and fragments and placed them in the basket, together with bits of rotten wood, covering the whole with the frock which Jack had left spread over the coin.

"Now when he comes he 'll think his money is there, till he looks, then won't he be mad!" With which happy thought Hod ran and hid in some bushes, where he could watch the fun.

Meanwhile Hod's trousers, with their legs full of coin, were shifted from shoulder to shoulder of his big brothers, as the strange procession emerged from

the woods and moved across Peternot's pasture, the squire lamely bringing up the rear. Arrived at his house, he brought out a meal-sack, and the coin was emptied into it. He then took two of the half-dollars and offered them to Hank.

"What's that fer?" said the tall youth, stooping to look at the money as if it had been some curious insect.

"I owe ye a dollar," said Peternot.

"So ye du," replied Hank, "but I prefer to take my pay in money as is money, if it's the same thing to you."

"You yourself said you believed this was bogus," added Dock; "an' I don't s'pose you want to be hauled up for passin' it."

Peternot felt the force of the remark, and with a long face took from his pocket-book a bank-note, which he handed to Hank.

"The same to me, if you please," said Dock. "I said a dollar *apiece*."

The squire protested against such extortion, but finally, reminded that he had said two of the boys might come with him, he paid Dock also. Then Cub and Tug held out expectant hands; whereat he flew into a passion.

"I don't even know 't the coin is good; and d'ye think I'm goin' to submit to any such swindle? Clear out, you melon-thieves!"

"All right!" said Cub, coolly, with his hand on the meal-sack; "but if I don't take my dollar with

me, I take *this* right back where we found it, and give it to the boy."

The firm position thus taken by Cub being approved by his brothers, especially by Tug, the poor old squire saw no way but to yield, and Cub and Tug were paid.

"Now a dollar for Hod," said Hank.

"For Hod!" roared out the squire, like a man tortured beyond endurance. "Hod did n't come!"

"But his breeches did. A dollar for his breeches,—if that will suit you any better. And quick!" said Hank, "or the coin goes into 'em agin, an' back to the basket."

"I hain't got another dollar!" said Peternot, trembling with wrath and vexation.

"You've a V there; we can change it," suggested Cub.

"Take it, and may the rum ye buy with it pizen ye, you pack o' thieves and robbers!"

"That sounds well from you, that have jest robbed a poor boy of what you more 'n half believe is good money, but which we're dumb sure is bogus, or else we never'd have helped ye off with it. Thieves and robbers, hey? Hear him, boys!"

Hank laughed derisively, and all went off chuckling gleefully over their Sunday afternoon's job, while the squire, entering his house, slammed and bolted the door behind them.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW JACK RESCUED LION, BUT MISSED THE TREASURE.

THE deacon's folks had not got home from meeting when Jack reached the house; but he saw them coming,—Mr. Chatford, Mr. and Mrs. Pipkin, and Phin, in the old one-horse wagon. He met them at the gate, and hurriedly told his story as they were driving on to the house.

"Boy, you 're crazy!" said the incredulous deacon.

"No, I ain't! Do come quick! They won't wait long, and then Peternot will take the money!"

"Well, well,—I suppose I 'll go,—pretty work for Sunday, I should say!"

"It was wrong,—I ought to have told you all about it before," said Jack, "but I thought I was doing the best thing; I did n't want anybody to know whose land I found the money on, so *he* could n't claim it."

"Hurrah! I 'll go too!" cried Phin. "You take care of the old mare, Phi!"

"If it 's the Huswick boys, I guess I better go and see fair play," remarked Mr. Pipkin; and he followed with the deacon, while Phin ran ahead with Jack.

The two boys reached the pasture; and now Jack, outstripping his companion, darted forward to a cer-

tain low length of fence, leaped upon it, and peered with a wild and anxious gaze into the woods.

"They're gone! they're gone!" he shrieked despairingly; and, tumbling over the rails, he ran through the bushes to the log.

They were gone indeed; but there was his basket, just where he had left it, covered with his frock. He flew to it, and stripped off the covering; and there Phin, as he came up, found him staring in utter consternation and dismay at a peck of melon rinds and rotten wood.

"Is that yer money?" said Phin. "I don't believe there was any: you've been fooling us!"

Jack threw out the rubbish, with the frantic thought that the coin must still be there.

"They've robbed me!" he sobbed out, when the bottom of the basket was reached and showed nothing but rinds and fragments of rotten wood.

A whining sound came to his ear; and just then Phin said, "O, just look! what's the matter with your dog?" Jack looked, and there, half hidden by the bushes, was Lion hanging by the hips from the forked limb of the log. He sprang to rescue him. The whiplash was tied in a tight knot, and out came the boy's knife to cut it.

This part of the fun Hod Huswick, in his ambush, had not anticipated, and did not relish.

"Here! that's my whiplash! don't ye cut it!" he cried; and from the bushes leaped the bare legs with their flapping linen, to the no little astonishment of Phineas Chatford.



JACK RESCUES LION.

"I'll cut it, and you too!" The whiplash was severed, and Jack, knife in hand, turned upon Hod.
"What have you done with my money?"

"Hain't done nothin' with 't,— I hain't teched it."

"Who has?"

"They took it, and stole my breeches to carry it off in, 'cause they said they'd promised you not to take the basket. They stole my whiplash, too, fer to

tie the dog with; I could n't help myself; an' now you 've cut it!"

"Where 've they gone?"

"To Peternot's; he hired 'em to help him carry the money home."

Then Jack saw how completely he had been outwitted and betrayed. He did not rave at his ill-luck; but to Mr. Chatford, who now approached with Mr. Pipkin, he told what had happened, and in a tone of unnatural calmness appealed to him for redress. "For if you can't do anything for me," he said, turning his pale face and tearless eyes at the empty basket, "I shall get my pay out of the old squire some way, if I live! Tell him he'd better look out!"

"There, there!" said the deacon, soothingly. "Don't make any foolish threats. I think it's most unwarrantable conduct on Peternot's part, and I'll see him about it."

"Go over there right now! why can't ye?"

"My boy, remember it's Sunday."

"He did n't remember it was Sunday when he got my money away!" said Jack.

"Very true," said the deacon. "But nothing will be gained by going to him now. To-morrow I'll see about it."

"To-morrow!" echoed Jack, with a fierce laugh.

"Burn his house down, I would!" whispered Phin, who, notwithstanding his profession of sympathy, felt, I regret to say, a secret gratification at Jack's loss.

"Where was 't ye found the money, Jack?" Mr. Pipkin inquired.

Jack led the way, and all went to look at the hollow log. While they were standing about it Hod's brothers returned. Hod ran for his trousers, but Cub, who was about to fling them at him, changed his mind and tossed them into a tree, where they lodged.

"That's for spilin' the melons," said he, regarding the heap on the ground.

Hod caught up a club to throw at his amiable brother, but wisely changed *his* mind, and sent the missile up into the tree, in the hope of bringing down his breeches. As they did not come at the first fire, he sent club after club up after them, sputtering all the while with indignation; while his brothers walked loungingly on to the hollow log.

Jack glared at them with deep and sullen hate, without deigning to speak; but the good deacon said, "Seems to me, fellows, you've played off a despicable trick on this poor boy here! You ought to have protected him in his rights; but instead of that you've helped rob him."

"Not much of a robbery, I guess, deacon," replied Dock, good-naturedly. "'T was nothin' but a lot o' bogus coin, no use to him nor to anybody."

"You're mistaken," replied the ingenuous Chatford, letting out a secret which Jack had thought it wise to keep. "The coin was genuine; at least I've good reason to think so." And he told why.

The Huswick boys looked at each other. "If that's the case, we did n't git so much the start of the squire as we thought we did!" muttered Dock. "On the contrary, he's got the start of us! What do ye say, Hank?"

"It's too late now to say anything about it; but hanged if I would n't 'a' swore the silver was no silver! I thought 't was nothin' but the old man's avariciousness made him think it might be good. We let him off too easy!" And Hank appeared more than half minded to go back and make better terms with the squire.

"They hung Lion up by the heels!" said Phin, getting behind his father, for he had a chronic dread of the Huswick tribe.

"I'd tie you up by the heels too," said Cub, with a peculiar smile, "if 't wa' n't Sunday!"

Whereupon Mr. Pipkin, who had been on the point of expressing an opinion, concluded to remain silent; the ruffians *might* forget what day it was!

"Well, come, boys; I don't see that we can do anything," said the deacon. "We may as well go home."

They walked back past the tree which Hod, in his imperfect attire, was still clubbing for the obstinate trousers, getting mad at them finally, and pelting them as if *they* were to blame for sitting there so quietly on the limb, in spite of him. Mr. Pipkin, out of respect to Jack's grief, took up the basket and

frock and carried them; while Jack lingered behind with Lion, pondering dark thoughts.

"Come, boy! you'd better go home," said Mr. Chatford, coaxingly. "Don't be down-hearted. It'll turn out right or be made up to you somehow, if you meet it in the right spirit, I'm confident."

"I'll be there pretty soon,—I can't go just yet," replied Jack, dissatisfied with everybody and everything; and he wandered off by himself in the woods, brooding upon his wrongs.

CHAPTER XIV.

SQUIRE PETERNOT AT HOME.

AFTER dismissing the Huswick boys, Squire Peternot carried his bag of coin into the room which served him as an office, where he had scarcely time to place it in a corner beside a bureau, when there came a dull thump at the kitchen door. He knew Mrs. Peternot's signal, knocking with the soft under-part of her feeble fist, and went to let her in.

She was a thin, wrinkled woman, dressed in black, with an expression of countenance almost as stern and sour as that of the grim old squire himself.

"Huh!" said she, scowling as she entered, "how happens it ye hain't got the fire agoin' an' the taters bilin'?"

"I've had somethin' else to think on. Where's Byron?" replied her husband, shortly.

"Gone to the barn with the hoss, I s'pose. But he won't unharness,—ketch him!"

"I did n't expect he would, with his Sunday clo'es on."

"Sunday clo'es or any clo'es on, he don't tech his fingers to anything that 'll sile 'em, or that looks like work, if he can help it," muttered good Mrs. Peternot, laying off her black bonnet. "You never would allow

sich laziness in your own son, an' why ye should in a nephew any more, I can't consait."

"Byron is a sort of visitor," said the squire. "And if I choose to favor him,—now that we've nobody else to show favors to,—why should n't I?"

"If you'd felt so indulgent towards *him* when *he* was alive, he might be with us now," replied the discontented wife, carefully doing up her shawl before putting it away in its appropriate drawer.

By *him* she meant their only son, whose bad habits had received so little encouragement beneath the parental roof, that he had taken them abroad with him and become their victim.

"Why must ye forever be gallin' me with that subject?" said Peternot, with a look of anguish. "You know I did what I thought was for the best. Come, I'll start the fire for ye, and put the pot on, if that'll make ye any better-natered."

"I'm good-natered enough, but I should think somethin' had riled you up," returned the lady. "What is it?"

"Boys have been in the melon-patch, for one thing."

"Been in the melon-patch! when ye stayed to hunt a'most a puppus to keep watch on 't!" And the good woman, having removed her Sunday cap, false hair and all, turned her thin face and scowling brows, crowned by a few thin gray locks, in amazement on her husband. "That's a likely story! was ye asleep, I wonder?"

Peternot made no reply, but went on kindling the fire in the open fireplace, until his nephew came in.

"I took the horse to the barn; did you want the harness off?" said that young gentleman, standing with his gloves and hat on, watching his uncle.

There was a slight affectation of foppery about Byron,—something which the plain people of the neighborhood called "soft"; and as Peternot, on his rheumatic knees before the fire, looked up through the smoke and ashes he was blowing into his face, and saw his dainty nephew stand there gloved and grinning, something of his wife's feeling towards that nice young man came over him,—or was it only his impatience at the smoke and ashes?

"Nat'rally, I want the harness off, arter the hoss has been standin' in 't a good part o' the day!" he answered, crossly.

"Oh!" said Byron; "I rather thought so, but I did n't know."

"I should think any fool would know that!"

"Very likely a fool would, but I did n't happen to." And, with the grin still on his features, the youth looked at the kneeling old man, very much as if he would have liked to give him a vigorous kick with his polished boot.

"No matter! I'll 'tend to it," said the squire, and went on with his blowing.

Byron smilingly withdrew.

"You never would have stood sich impudence from *him*," said Mrs. Peternot, through the open door of a

bedroom into which she had retired; “an’ why should ye from a nephew ?”

The squire made no reply to this reasonable question, but, having kindled a fire and put on the pot, went out to take care of the horse. Byron meanwhile walked about the place with his fine clothes on, until supper was ready.

“Come, Byron,” then said the squire; and both went in and took seats at the little oilcloth-covered table. The supper consisted of boiled potatoes served with their skins on, thin slices of fried pork swimming in their own melted fat, and a heavy and sour kind of bread, which, by its quality and complexion, always reminded Byron of his Aunt Peternot, who seemed to have mixed up something of herself in the dough. He was blessed with a good appetite, however, and he ate heartily, notwithstanding his unpleasant consciousness of the fact — or was it only his imagination? — that the good woman watched with a begrudging scowl every morsel that went to his plate; seeming to say, “What! another tater! More bread! A second cup of tea, and sich big cups too! Seems to me I would n’t make a hog of myself, if I *was* visitin’ my uncle!”

It was never a cheerful household; on Sundays it was even less sociable than on other days, and on this particular Sunday afternoon, Byron thought the cloud which hung over it unusually heavy. Something seemed to trouble his uncle, who sat grim and silent, sipping his tea scalding hot, and working his

massy jaws as if the pork and potatoes had done him an injury, and he was wreaking a gloomy vengeance upon them.

"Where are you going, Byron?" the squire asked, as his nephew was about leaving the house after supper.

"Thought I'd walk out,— did n't know but I might call at Deacon Chatford's by and by,— I hear they have a little singing there, Sunday evenings."

Mrs. Peternot scowled at the young gentleman, then turned and scowled at her husband, and said in an undertone: "It's that 'ere Annie Felton, the schoolmarm! He's arter her,— jest like all the rest on 'em!"

"Byron," said the squire, solemnly, "I'd like to speak with you before you go out." And he led the way to his office-room.

"Now what?" thought Byron, anxiously. "Is he going to tell me I've been here about long enough, and had better pack up my trunk and clear?"

"Byron," said the squire, closing the door behind them, "it's a subject I ought not to bring up on the Sabbath day, but it weighs upon my mind, and I've concluded I'd better speak to you about it. See what you think of this." And he took from the corner behind the bureau the meal-bag with its compact but weighty contents, which he set down with a heavy chink before his nephew.

Byron, feeling greatly relieved, peeped curiously into the sack as Peternot opened it. "By mighty!"

said he, surprised at what he saw, and thrusting in his hand. "Where did ye get this?"

In a few words the squire told the story. Byron in the mean time carefully tested one of the coins, cutting it with his knife and ringing it on the hearth.

"All right," said he; "you've got possession. But what's the use? 'T ain't good for anything."

"You think so?"

"I'm sure of it. Very well done, for counterfeiting,—but, of course!" And Byron tossed the piece back into the bag with a smile of contempt.

"Wal, that's jest the conclusion I've come to," said the squire. "I thought all along it might be bogus; and as soon as I got it fairly into my hands, I was sartin on 't. What provokes me is the trouble it cost,—and more'n all, the money them pesky Huswick boys gouged out of me!" And the old man groaned.

By this time Mrs. Peternot, her curiosity excited regarding the conference of uncle and nephew, came into the room, for an excuse exclaiming, "Why, squire! what have you got the house shet up so tight for?" and proceeded to open the window. "Massy on us! what ye got in the bag?"

"I told ye I had somethin' to think on, this afternoon," said Peternot; "and this is it."

"It has cost him five dollars," remarked Byron, pleasantly, "and it's worth, as old metal, about fifty cents!"

"Wal, you have been fooled, complete!" exclaimed

the old lady. "I don't wonder ye kep' it to yerself! Five dollars ! have ye lost yer wits ?"

"Come, come ! I'm feelin' uncomf'table enough about it, a'ready !" said the squire. "But there's a possibility, yet, that it may be good money. Can't tell. I should do jest so agin, under the sarcumstances, most likely. Any way it's better to have it in my possession, than to leave bad boys to carry it off and pass it, as they undoubtedly would. I don't want it to make trouble 'twixt me and my neighbors, though ; and, Byron, if you *are* going over to the deacon's, you might see what he has to say about it; tell him it's counterfeit, and that I thought so — kind o' thought so — all along, but considered it my duty — you understand ?"

Byron understood, and smilingly replied that he would "make it all right" for his uncle.

CHAPTER XV.

JACK AND THE HUSWICK BOYS.

JACK—no longer the bright and cheerful lad whom we so lately saw picking up stones in the hilly pasture—went home, brooding darkly over his wrongs, and refused to be comforted by anything the good deacon and his wife could say to him.

“He robbed me, and hung up my dog by the heels,—got the Huswick tribe to help him; and here I am, alone against all of ‘em, and nobody lifts a hand or says a word to help *me!*!” was his bitter complaint, as he took the milk-pails after supper, and went out of the kitchen, shutting the door after him (I am sorry to say) with something like a bang.

“I’m a little disappointed in Jack,” observed the deacon, sadly.

“O, well, I don’t know,” replied his wife,—“you need n’t be; almost any boy of as much will and spirit as he has would feel so. He has been shamefully wronged,—you’ll allow that.”

“But he blames me!” said the deacon.

“Blames everybody!” struck in Mr. Pipkin, on the point of going out, but standing and holding the door open. “I don’t s’pose anything under heavens would satisfy him, Mis’ Chatford, but for me and the deacon to march over to Peternot’s, give the old rep-

robate a good cudgellin', which I don't deny but what he desarves fast enough, and lug hum the money."

"I wish the money had been at the bottom of the sea before ever Jack stumbled upon it!" said Mr. Chatford. "I shall certainly go over and see the squire in the morning, and be plain with him,— for I do think he has acted a most dishonorable part in the matter."

"I back ye up on that," said Mr. Pipkin.

"A sight of good your backing up will do!" remarked Mrs. Pipkin, sarcastically. "It won't restore Jack's money. I don't wonder he's sulky,— we all set down, so quiet, talking over his loss, instead of walking straight over to the squire's, and doing something, as I believe I should if I was a man."

"Wish ye was one, for a little spell," said Mr. Pipkin, showing all his front teeth. "Guess you'd make old Peternot's fur fly! Guess he'd wish —"

"Mr. Pipkin!" interrupted Mrs. Pipkin, in a warning voice, "you'll oblige me very much by shutting that door, with yourself on the outside!"

Mr. Pipkin still showed a considerable amount of ivory, as he turned, and said aside to the deacon, with a wink: "These 'ere women!— have to indulge 'em. No use of answerin' back, as old Dr. Larkin, minister o' the gospil,— six foot high, eighty year old, wore a wig, best man in the world,— said once, as he was goin' into a house where there was a parrot, and the parrot sung out, 'That's an old fool!' — 'No use of

answerin' back!' says the good old doctor,— hi, hi! — I often think on 't."

"Mr. Pipkin," said Mrs. Pipkin, wit' biting severity, pointing at the door, "will you oblige me?"

And Mr. Pipkin obliged her, chuckling as he went.

Jack sat milking a cow, with his head pressed against her flank, looking down into the pail, in which the bright streams were dancing, when Phin came into the yard.

"Say, Jack!" cried that perfidious youngster, "was n't it too bad, though, for you to be robbed of all that money?" although Phin's private sentiment was that it was a capital joke. "And what do you think I overheard just now? Mrs. Pip said if she was you she would get hold of it again somehow; and father said you would have a right to take it anywhere, if you could lay hands on it; he did n't know but 't would be *justifiable*, — that was his word."

"That's all the good words do; for how can I get it?" said Jack, who, having, in his imagination, again and again, by some desperate act, overthrown his enemy and regained his lost treasure, would have been glad enough to know how his wild thoughts could be successfully reduced to practice.

He was still nourishing in his excited mind these fiery fancies, when, the milking over, he went to walk in the orchard; having all sorts of fearful adventures with the gaunt old Peternot, and always coming off triumphant with his treasure. Now he hurled him

down his own cellar-way, and buttoned the door. Now he caught him, and, single-handed, tied him with a clothes-~~tie~~, drawing it dreadfully tight, in the hardest kind of hard knots, and left him bound to a bed-post. Then the squire fell dead in a fit,—a judgment upon him for his wickedness,—just as he was lifting the money into his wagon in order to carry it away and sell it. Or Lion took the old man down and held him while his young master bore off the coin. Jack got the treasure in every instance,—only to wake up at last, and find that all his dreams of what he might do left him still hopelessly wronged and baffled.

He passed on through the orchard, and unconsciously drew near the scene of the afternoon's conflict. That had still a strange attraction for him; he must once more view the spot where his hopes of fortune had been raised so high, to be followed so soon by impotent rage and despair.

As he advanced through the darkening woods,—for it was now dusk,—he heard noises in the direction of the hollow log, and thought, with a sudden wild leap of the heart, that one of his dreams of vengeance might be coming true. “It’s old Peternot! he has come back to get the rest of the money in the log! Here! keep behind me, Lion!”

Then he heard voices, and, gliding near, among the shadowy trees, perceived that it was not the squire, but some of the “Huswick tribe,” whom the hope of finding more coin had brought again to the hollow

log. There were Cub and Tug and Hank ; they had broken the rotten shell to pieces, laying the cavity completely open ; and they now stood around it, poking in the rubbish with sticks or fingers or feet, hunting — in vain it seemed — for stray half-dollars.

“ Hullo, Bub ! ” said Hank, “ ye made a party clean sweep on ‘t, did n’t ye ! Here’s the old box, but not a dollar to pay us for our trouble ! That seems kind o’ mean.”

Jack did not answer, but, keeping Lion at his side, walked slowly past the group, glaring sullenly at them from under his angry brows.

“ He’s afraid to speak,” said Cub.

“ Afraid ? ” said Jack, turning and facing him. “ I despise you too much to speak to you ! Great lubberly fellows like you, to take the part of an old miser against one boy,— I look upon you as cowards and thieves ! ”

“ Remember how we served your dog ! ” said Cub, with a malignant grin.

“ Yes, I do remember it ! You had to wait till I was gone before you had the courage to do even that ! If you had n’t lied to me, and got me out of the way first, you never would have taken that money,— somebody would have been hurt first ! ”

“ Look out ! ” said Cub, seizing a broken branch, and advancing towards the audacious youngster.

“ Come on ! ” cried Jack, jeeringly. “ You’re big enough to cut up into six decent fellows,— if anything decent could be made out of such rubbish,—

but you 'd better bring fifteen or twenty of your big brothers to help you ! See here !" said Jack, as the broken branch came whizzing past his head, " two can play at that game !" And he sent back a club with so sure an aim that it took the burly Cub full in the stomach. " No credit to me !" yelled Jack, alert on his legs. " Could n't help hitting such a big mark ! "

" O, git out, Cub !" Hank called after his brother ; " what 's the use ? I don 't blame the boy. We 've been hard enough on him, and now I 'm goin ' to take his part. Come back here, Bub ! I want to talk. You sha 'n't be hurt."

" Hurt ? as if I was afraid of him ! It 's all I can do to keep my dog from his throat,— he has a grudge to wipe out ! Here, Lion ! Put the souls of the whole tribe of you in a balance, and my dog 's would outweigh 'em ! You could shake 'em all in a pepper-box, and not hear 'em rattle ; they would have as much room in a teapot as so many crabs in Lake Erie ! "

" I like your spunk, Bub !" said Hank, laughing. " And, see here ! we never would have gi'n the old man the money, if we 'd thought 't was good for shucks. You know that."

" No, I don 't know it ! I believe you 're mean enough for anything."

" That 's the talk ! You 've a right to think so. But what if we should help you now to git the money back ? "

" You can't!" exclaimed Jack.

" Can't! you don't know what we can do!"

" Then why don't you go and git it?"

" 'Cause we've no right to,— 'tain't ours,— 't would be stealin'. But you've the fust claim on 't, — *you* could take it, and *we* could help ye, and then Peternot might git it back if he could."

" I guess nobody'd get it again, if it was once in your hands!"

" There ye do us wrong," said Tug. " We ain't over-pe'tic'lar 'bout helpin' ourselves to melons and sich trash where we can find it, but money is another thing."

" And did n't I make Hod throw down a handful of the half-dollars he was pickin' up for ye?" added Cub.

" Which you thought was bogus," retorted Jack, — who was, however, beginning to be impressed by these friendly suggestions.

" Of course, we should expect a little suthin for our trouble," said Hank; " but that can all be agreed on beforehand. If you can git back the money, you won't mind payin' us — say — here's me an' Tug an' Cub — ten dollars apiece, — that's thirty dollars, for the resk we run?"

" But we can't get it!"

" Mebby not, but we can try. No harm in that. It's gittin' dark now, — we can edge along towards the squire's, and see what we can do. Send your dog hum; he'll only be in the way."

Jack was far from putting implicit trust in the honor of a Huswick, even where the serious subject of money was involved; but was not this his only chance — though a slender one — of getting back any portion of his treasure? And would he not prefer sharing it with these scamps, to leaving it peaceably in the possession of his enemy, the squire?

"If we can only find out where it is," said Hank, "then we can be arguin' with the old man, — for I guess he 'll let us into the house, one at a time, — an' finally carry it off 'fore his face an' eyes, without we can hit on some luckier way."

Jack remembered Mr. Chatford's word, reported to him by Phin, — that such an act on his part would be *justifiable*, — and so, regardless of the whisperings of conscience and of prudence, which nevertheless he could not quite reconcile to the course he was about to take, yielded to temptation, sent Lion home, and entered into an agreement with the Huswick boys.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW JACK CALLED AT THE SQUIRE'S.

ABOUT an hour later several dark figures might have been seen creeping stealthily along, behind Squire Peternot's garden wall, in the direction of the house. A dim light shone at a window, and towards this they cautiously advanced. Jack remembered how, on a former occasion, he had gone with two of these same companions,—Cub and Tug, though he did not know them then,—in a mob that was to have attacked Aunt Patsy's house, how they had approached *her* window, and how he had abhorred their base designs; and he could not help wondering a little at the strange chance which now made him the accomplice of such wrong-doers. He seemed to himself in the mean time much more the reckless little canal-driver of old times, than the better self which had been developed under the wholesome influences of his new home and friends.

"Now keep dark, boys," said Hank, stopping behind some quince-bushes, "till I see how the land lays." He stole round the edge of the bushes, to a spot that commanded a good view of the window, not more than two rods off. Being tall, he could look into it and see by the light of a dim tallow candle what was going on in the Peternot sitting-room.

"All right. Only the old man and woman. She's jest goin' into t' other room,—to bed, I guess. He sets by the table, chin in his hands; book open beside him,—Bible, looks like,—but he ain't readin'. No, she ain't goin' to bed,—there she comes back agin."

"Keep still!" whispered Jack. "There's somebody!"

Somebody approaching from the street, entering the yard, walking straight towards the house, and passing out of sight by the front corner.

"Old man's nephew! the Dinks feller!" whispered Hank. "Comes in at the door,—says something,—old man looks up,—lights another candle; they are going to another room."

A light now appeared at another window, which Jack, greatly excited, discovered to be partly open. Close by it grew a lilac-bush, under cover of which he drew near, and peeped. He saw the tall form of Peternot cross the room, and then heard a clatter of chairs. Growing bolder, he advanced his head still farther, and saw uncle and nephew seated between a bureau in one corner, and a table on which the light was, at one side of the room.

"Did ye see 'em? have a talk with 'em?" Peter-not was saying.

"Yes," replied Byron Dinks; "they did n't have much of a sing,—schoolma'am was n't there,—not much company; but, having an eye to the winter school, thought I'd stay and make myself agreeable."

"That's right, that's right, nephew. And did ye make it all smooth with Mr. Chatford?"

"I guess so; said you thought only of doing your duty in the matter; you did n't want the money, but, knowing it was counterfeit —"

"There you went a little too fur, nephew; I did n't know; but go on."

"It was well I made the statement, however, for that brought out a surprising fact. You'll be astonished, uncle!"

"Hey? what is it?"

"The deacon said he was gratified to know you had acted on the supposition that the coin was spurious; and he felt sure that you would be ready to do the boy justice when you found out your mistake."

"Mistake? What mistake?"

"Coin is genuine!"

"No!"

"He says so; says he took half a dollar of it to the goldsmith, over at the Basin, and he pronounced it good; at any rate, he gave a good piece for it."

"Nephew, you amaze me!—I—this is news—news indeed!"

The squire got up, and, turning to the corner of the room, drew forth from behind the bureau an object, the sight of which made Jack's heart beat wildly.

"That's it!" whispered Hank in his ear, leaning forwards, behind a branch of the lilac-bush.

Peternot opened the loosely tied sack, and uncle and nephew eagerly examined its contents.



JACK AT THE WINDOW.

"It's the tarnish that makes the silver look so bad," said the squire. "That deceived both on us. I had all the while a strange feelin' that the coin was good, though my reason said the contrary. It was only arter I'd got it, and had paid the Huswicks, that my reason got the upper hand, and I felt so sure 't was bogus. I'm glad you talked with the deacon. It's astonishing! I did n't make so bad a bargain with the rogues, arter all! I guess we'd better keep

it all together," added the squire, as Byron seemed inclined to retain the specimens he had been handling.

"Be ye comin', any time to-night?" called the voice of Mrs. Peternot from the adjoining room.

"She's waitin'," said the squire. "We was just goin' to 'tend prayers, when you come in,—had been delayin' a little on your account. I'll put it back here for the present; then, arter prayers, I'll see what had better be done with 't for the night."

Peternot, having returned the bag to its niche, sent his nephew out of the room before him, and followed, bearing the candle, which he blew out, to save it, as he crossed the threshold. The door was left open, however, and a dim light stole into the room from the kitchen beyond.

"Now's your time!" whispered Hank. "I'll put ye in there! Pass out the bag,—be still about it,—it's all right."

"I can't, without making a noise!" replied Jack, trembling with excitement. "They'll hear."

"No, they won't! Don't hurry. I'll help you. Take off your shoes."

Jack took off his shoes and hat, giving them to Tug to hold. Still he hesitated.

"I wish they had shut the door! Wait a minute! Hark!"

"The old man is readin' the Scriptur's!" said Hank. "Then he'll pray. It could n't have happened better. Ye could grind a scythe, when he's prayin', an' he would n't hear."

Jack listened a moment, and heard the squire read in a loud, nasal tone : —

"But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what hour the thief would come he would have watched."

"I can't go!" Jack whispered, turning away.

"You can!" Hank insisted. "Now or never! Your only chance. I'll lift you up."

"Well! lift! careful!"

Hank lifted him, and Jack went in at the window feet foremost. In a moment he found himself standing on the floor, — frightened, but alert and resolute. He did not think he had made much noise.

The squire continued reading : —

"The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites."

A thrill of terror crept over poor Jack, who could not help thinking that all this applied, somehow, particularly to himself. But it was too late now to draw back, he thought.

He glided across the carpetless floor, making scarcely any noise with his bare feet, except that his ankle-bones cracked alarmingly. He did not stop until he reached the corner by the bureau; when he perceived, by the changed tones of voice, that Peter-not was no longer reading, but talking, — making a few solemn comments on "the words," as he phrased it, which they were "called to consider." It was

well for Jack that he had seen good Mr. and Mrs. Chatford at their devotions, and also known them in their daily lives, for otherwise I know not what contemptuous ideas of religion he might have received, from witnessing the family worship of the hard-hearted and worldly-minded squire.

As Peternot's discourse was broken by intervals of silence, Jack thought, "I'll wait till he begins to pray." Then came a clatter of chairs: "They're going to kneel down!" thought he, and grasped tightly the loose top of the bag. But just then, to his consternation, he heard heavy footsteps approaching; somebody was entering the room!

It was Peternot, who, feeling now a more anxious care for the coin than when he believed it to be spurious, had remembered, during his devotions (his heart being where his treasure was), that the window of the room was open, and who deemed it prudent to step in and shut it before he began his prayer.

The terrified Jack crowded himself into the corner by the bureau, and waited, breathless with apprehension, while Peternot closed the window, and turned to go out. The old man took two or three steps towards the bureau, and gave a glance in the direction of the bag; but having no light, he did not see the youthful house-breaker stuck up there in the dark niche, like a shivering ghost.

Then he went back into the kitchen, leaving the door wide open, the window closed and fastened, and Jack shut in.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW JACK TOOK TO HIS HEELS.

IN a moment all was still in the kitchen ; then, after a brief silence, Peternot began to pray, in a low, solemn tone of voice. Jack, waiting and listening in his corner, was dismayed at this, remembering what Hank had just said of the old man's prayers.

"That's no praying!" thought he. "I shall never dare stir, unless he puts in, and makes more noise. Is that the best he can do, I wonder?"

Peternot soon showed that he could do better, his voice rising as he proceeded in a manner that greatly encouraged Jack, who now slipped from his corner, in order to make an observation.

Venturing to peep in at the open door, he saw the squire and his wife and nephew all kneeling before their chairs in the kitchen, with their backs toward him. That he considered a fortunate circumstance : they would not see him if he closed the door.

"But if I shut it," he reflected, "I shall be in the dark, and I may stumble over a chair ! I 'll take the money to the window, and get everything ready first, — see just what I must do, and how to do it ; then I 'll shut it."

He drew the bag from the corner, lifted it by its long, loose end, and carried it across the room, cast-

ing one more glance at the kneeling group as he passed the door. Then, having set the bag down under the window, he carefully felt for the fastenings, and found the usual spring in one side of the sash. This he pressed with his thumb, and ascertained that the window would easily come open. All being ready, he stepped back, closed the door softly, without daring to latch it, however, and returned to put his plan into execution.

Pressing the window-spring, he raised the sash, and found himself at once in communication with Hank and Cub on the outside.

"Now, hand it out!" said Hank.

"Wait! a little higher," replied Jack, still pushing up the sash. Unfortunately, it stuck in the frame, and as he still kept his thumb on the spring to prevent its snapping with a noise when it reached a notch, he could not tell when it was fast. "Now, hold it," he said, and stooped to take up the bag.

Both Cub and Hank had hold of the sash; but as it appeared to be firm in its place, both let go of it in order to seize the treasure; and so it chanced that, between them and Jack, down came the window with a loud clatter and a rattling of glass, broken by Cub's unlucky fingers in a fruitless attempt to prevent the accident.

Frightened by the noise, which he knew would alarm the household, Jack instantly threw up the sash again, tumbled out the bag, and was tumbling himself out, when the squire rushed into the room.

The fugitive scrambled head foremost through the narrow opening, and had nearly escaped, when Peter-not with a firm grip seized him by the legs.

"Byron! Wife!" roared the squire within the room. "Light!"

"Boys! help!" screamed Jack, hanging head downwards on the outside, and kicking violently with the captured members.



AN ABRUPT LEAVE-TAKING.

With one hand he laid hold of the lilac-bush. Hank, returning to his assistance, caught him by the shoulder ; while at the same time Byron Dinks relieved his uncle by grasping one of the unlucky legs. Hank pulled on the outside ; uncle and nephew pulled on the inside ; and for a moment it seemed to Jack that he must certainly break in two, if the struggle continued. It lasted but three or four seconds, and was over by the time Mrs. Peternot came with the candle. Jack succeeded first in freeing the foot held by the nephew, and then made such vigorous use of it that he quickly brought off the other. He fell to the ground, and scrambled away behind the bushes ; while Peter-not, shouting, "Thieves ! robbers !" turned to the door, and rushed out of the house in pursuit.

Jack heard the shout, and the opening of the door, and presently the ominous sound of heavy feet coming after him ! He had lost sight of Hank when he fell ; and now he had not the faintest idea which way his companions had fled. Had he paused to observe and listen, he might perhaps have heard their retreating footsteps, or caught sight of their gliding forms in the darkness ; but the tall form treading close at his heels left him no time for consideration. He went plunging blindly over the wall, and heard the stones rattle again as his pursuer came plunging after him.

The moon had not yet risen, and objects below the horizon were scarcely visible,— an unfortunate circumstance for Jack, whose bare feet suffered in this

mad race over the rough ground. Heedless of his hurts, however, he sped on, not in the direction of his own home, but of Aunt Patsy's house ; while *thud, thud !* came the footsteps behind him, nearer and nearer, he fancied. Two or three times he turned his head, and there was the dim shape striding upon his heels, with a hand outstretched to grasp him, he more than once imagined. Never before would he have believed that the old man could run so !

This strange race was brought to a ludicrous close by a rock which lay in Jack's way, as he was making for Aunt Patsy's woods. He tripped over it, and fell headlong ; and over him fell his pursuer, — a sprawling heap.

“ Hang it ! ” said the latter, “ you come pooty nigh breakin' my neck ! ” And he lay on the ground laughing, while Jack sprang to his feet.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW THE HEELS WENT HOME WITHOUT SHOES AND STOCKINGS.

THAT you, Hank?"

"Yes! Did n't you know me? What in time made you leg it so? I could n't hardly keep up with you!"

"I took you for old Peternot!" said the excited Jack. "I thought you got off ahead of me."

Upon that Hank laughed again. "I knew the squire would come out; I hid by the quince-bushes till he showed himself, and then rushed out before him."

"What was that for?"

"To lead him a wild-goose chase, while Cub and Tug got away with the money."

"Where are they?" demanded the anxious Jack.

"Out of his reach,—that's all I know. He did n't foller us but a few rods; the old chap's so lame he can't run wuth a cent. The idee of your takin' me for him!"

"Which way did they go? You know!" exclaimed Jack, who was in no mood for laughing at this odd mistake.

"Mebby we shall fall in with 'em, crossin' the pastur'," said Hank. "Ye need n't be alarmed about your

money, if we don't. That'll be safe. Better keep that hid somewhere, till you're ready to dispose on't; for there's no knowin' what the old man may do. Leave that to me an' Cub; I'll look out for your interest."

"Tug has got my hat and shoes!" said Jack, in sore perplexity.

"He'll keep 'em safe," replied Hank. "Need n't worry."

"My stockings!" exclaimed Jack.

"Has he got them too?"

"No; I wish he had!" For now it occurred to him that the stockings, which he certainly had on his feet before he jumped from the window, must have come off in his captors' hands when he escaped!

"No matter; money is all right; we can afford to lose a pair of stockin's or two," was Hank's consolatory remark.

He failed, however, to impress this cheerful view of the matter upon Jack, who, bareheaded, barefoot, uncertain that he should ever see his money again, felt anything but happy over the success of his rash attempt.

Hearing a low whistle not far off, Hank said, "That's them!" and whistled in response. "One on 'em, anyhow," as a single figure was seen approaching. "Tug?"

"Hullo!" said Tug. "Where's Cub?"

"Ain't he with you?" said Hank. "I told ye to keep together!"

"I thought we'd better scatter, when the old man and the Dinks feller come after us; one on 'em—I don't know which 't was—chased me 'bout a quarter of a mile."

"Where are my shoes?" said Jack.

"Your shoes?" echoed Tug.

"Yes! and my hat?"

"Your hat?"

"Yes! what have you done with 'em?" cried Jack, choking with impatience and anger.

"O, to be sure! I believe I put 'em on the ground under the lilac-bush; you was so long in the room, I got tired of holdin' on 'em; and darned if I did n't forgit all about 'em!"

Jack was incensed at this negligence. "That's the way you help a fellow, is it?"

"Did n't we help you?" said Hank. "You would n't have got away at all if it had n't been for me."

"You!" retorted Jack; "if you had only caught me at first, when I was getting out of the window, I should n't have had any trouble! But you waited till the old man got hold of me; and now I've lost hat and shoes and stockings and money!"

Hank answered indignantly, "Won't you believe me when I tell you your money is all right? You sha'n't be robbed of a dollar. I'm sorry about the stockin's; but your hat and shoes you can find, I suppose, jest where Tug left 'em."

"If Tug will go with me!"

"What's the use of two goin'?" said Tug. "We'll

be lookin' for Cub, and meet you at the corner of the woods." To this Hank agreed.

Seeing there was nothing else to be done, Jack ran back across the pasture to Peternot's garden, and was creeping up behind the quince-trees, when he heard a voice, and saw a glimmer of light approaching around the corner of the house. Then appeared Squire Peternot, carrying a lantern, followed by his nephew Byron, armed with a heavy club. They were looking along the ground and beating the shrubbery. Jack didn't know whether to run away, or lie flat on the grass. While he was hesitating, he heard the old man say, "'T was robbery, downright robbery! House-breakin',—a clear case! The rogues have got off with their booty, but this ain't the last on 't, they 'll find !'

"State-prison job," replied the nephew, "if I know anything about law. The fact that a piece of property is in litigation don't justify one claimant in entering burglariously the premises of another claimant and stealing said piece of property."

"I 'll have out a s'arch-warrant," Peternot declared, "and seize that coin wherever it can be found. If the deacon's boys are mixed up in 't, they 'll find it 's a sorry business!"

Jack grew faint at heart, as he watched and listened. The men with the lantern and club passed the window through which he had escaped, and paused for a minute or more to examine the ground all about the lilac-bush. They found footprints, but he heard

nothing about either hat or shoes. They then passed on, and the door closed behind them as they entered the house.

Troubled with heavy misgivings, feeling that he would give almost anything to be well out of this scrape, Jack rose and slunk away, without attempting to solve the mystery of the hat and shoes. He was no longer so anxious as he had been to get the money once more into his possession; and finding Hank and Tug faithful to their appointment, he said to them, "When you find Cub, hide the money, and keep it till you hear from me." And he told them of the threatened search-warrant.

Hank swore fidelity to Jack's interest; and the wretched boy,—never more wretched in mind, in all his checkered life, than at that hour,—parting from the brothers on the border of the woods, hurried home, and reached Deacon Chatford's house just as the moon was appearing above the eastern clouds. The windows were dark; the folks had all gone to bed, leaving the kitchen door unfastened for him. He entered softly; but as he was going up to his room, the voice of Mrs. Chatford called to him, "That you, Jack?"

"Yes 'm."

"What made you so late?"

"I did n't think it was so late," replied Jack; "I'm sorry if I've kept you awake."

"Never mind, if you have come home all right. It was thoughtful in you to take off your shoes. I

was n't asleep ; I could n't help feeling anxious about you."

How kind, how good she was ! Jack, filled with a sense of guilt and dread, longed to go to her bedside and relieve his burdened heart by confessing what he had done. But just then the deacon spoke, in the impatient tone of one whose sleep had been disturbed : " Did you bolt the door ? "

" Yes, sir."

" Well, get quiet as soon as you can. I want to sleep."

And Jack went on up the dark stairway to his lonely bed.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW JACK WAS INVITED TO RIDE.

JACK was up very early the next morning ; and having put fresh stockings and a pair of old shoes on his scratched and bruised feet, he went out, determined at the first opportunity to tell Mr. Chatford all that had occurred, and ask his advice.

It was a little after daybreak. Mrs. Pipkin was making a fire as he went through the kitchen ; she guessed the deacon was n't stirring yet. Jack took the milkpails and went into the barn-yard. The cows got up, one after another, stretched themselves, flirted their tails, and waited to be milked. He placed his stool beside one of them ; and there he sat milking in the cool of the morning,— keeping all the while an anxious lookout for the deacon,— when the large front gate rattled, and he saw a man trying to unfasten it.

“Lift it up a little,” said Jack.

“O, I see !” The man came into the yard ; and Jack recognized one of the farmers of the neighbourhood, named Sellick, rather popular among the boys as a joker and story-teller. “Did n't know you had a new way of fastening your gates over here !” And he laughed, as he did at almost everything he said, drawing his upper lip up to his nose, and sur-

rounding his little gray eyes with merry wrinkles.
“Where’s the deacon, sonny?”

“My name ain’t Sonny,” replied Jack.

Sellick laughed at that too. “You remind me of Mose Chatford. Mose has got a little dry wit about him, sometimes. When I fust moved into the place, he was about twelve year old ; and one day he had his cousin, Syd Chatford, making him a visit, — older’n he was, but a little bit of a chap ; you know little Syd. I had seen Mose, but I had n’t seen Syd before ; and noticing a kind of family resemblance between ’em, I said, ‘Mose, is that one of your boys ?’ meaning his folks’s, of course. But the little rascal stretches himself up, — pompous as could be, grave as a judge, — ‘No, I ain’t a man of a family !’ says he, and walks on. Sassy, his daddy said, when I told him on’t ; but I joke the boys, and I’m willing they should joke me. Where’s the deacon ? I’ll ask you agin, and leave off the sonny.”

Jack thought the deacon had n’t got out yet.

“That never ’ll do, never ’ll do ! Bad example, deacon ! Airly bird ketches the worm. I shall have to give him a talking to. Fie, fie, deacon ! Where’s Pip, Mr. Pip, Mr. Pipkin, Mr. Philander P. Pipkin, Esquire ?” the merry man rattled away. “I’m particular to give all the names I’ve heard him called by, so as to get an answer out of you the fust time.”

“I rather think you ’ll find him in the barn,” said Jack.

“You think wrong this time. I know I sha’n’t

find him in the barn. Do you know why?" said the merry man, with his upper lip at his nose. "Because I sha' n't go to the barn and look. Is that a good reason? How long before you'll be through milking?"

"I don't know; not very soon, unless somebody comes and helps me."

"S'pose I help you. I can milk. I'm an old hand at it. Never shall forgit my fust trial, though! Visiting my uncle — Sunday-go-to-meeting clo'es on — he told me to look out; but I was a little smarter 'n anybody else in the world, them days: I could milk! So I took holt — both hands — milked one stream into my vest-pocket and t' other into my eye, and quit. Thought that would do for a fust lesson."

"I don't know why you should help me milk," said Jack, as Sellick was getting a pail and stool.

"Twill keep me out of mischief, while I'm waiting. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. Which cow kicks? I don't want anything to do with a kicking cow. I used to have one, a fust-class kicker. Hit me once; thought the lightning had struck the haystack! I tried tying her leg. Tied it to an old sleigh under the shed; she kicked that to pieces. Tied it to the sill of the barn; and by George! she started to kick the barn down. Tied it then to an old grin'stone lying in the yard; and at the fust kick she sent it like a pebble from a sling right over the kitchen chimbly, quarter of a

mile at least; fell into Welby's bog; sunk so deep I've never thought 't would pay to fish it out."

"What did you do with her then?" Jack asked, trying to forget his troubles in listening to this nonsense.

"What could I do but kill her? One pail she kicked over full of milk, we never saw or heard of agin; but Dyer's folks, live over on the North Road, about a mile off, said they had quite a little shower of milk at their house that morning,—wondered where it come from. I had a pair of boots made out of her hide; but I never could wear 'em. I was always kicking somebody, and gitting hauled up for 'sault 'n' battery."

Mr. Chatford now came into the yard, and saw with surprise his neighbor Sellick milking one of his cows.

"Have n't you any milking to do at home, Sellick?"

"Yes, but the boys can do that. I've invited Jack here to go and ride with me; and I thought I would help him a little about his chores fust."

"Go and ride? I have n't heard anything about it!" said Jack.

"Did n't I mention it? Wal, that was an oversight!"

"I thought you had come to see Mr. Chatford. You asked for him."

"Did I? Mebby I wanted to ask him if he was willing you should go,—we must keep the right side o' the deacon! I left my wagon at the fence.

below here : but I'll take it along to the gate, thinking Squire Peternot might want to hitch there."

Jack turned pale. But the deacon said, "What nonsense are you up to now, Sellick ! "

" What I do you call it nonsense for a neighbor to come and take your boy to ride ! Here, Phin, come and finish this cow : she's done, all but stripping. I wouldn't begin another, Jack. We must be starting."

" Squire Peternot's at the house, wants to see ye," said Phin to his father.

" Come, has he ? " laughed Sellick. " I felt sure he would want to hitch to that post ! Wal, Jack ! me an' you's got to go over to the Basin with the squire, on business. I'm a constable, you know. Did n't think of that, did ye ? Strip her clean, Phin ; it dries up a cow like Sancho, to leave a little milk in her bag."

" Sellick ! " cried the deacon, while Jack stood white and dumb with consternation, " what's the meaning of this ? "

" I've a writ for the boy's arrest," replied Sellick. " Sorry for it. A little diffikilt between him and the squire. Nice man, the squire ! As it's on his own complaint, he thought it more properer that the boy should be taken before some other justice ; — a very nice man, Peternot ! Him and his nephew is going over to the Basin with us, — witnesses in the case, — before Judge Garty. You should n't have picked a quarrel with the old man, my son, — nice man ! "

"Come, Sellick!" cried the deacon, impatiently. "No more joking. I can't believe Peternot has taken any such step; there's no ground for it! Why, he's the party at fault, if anybody! What's the charge?"

"Breaking a winder, I believe," replied Sellick, winking at Jack. "Mis' Peternot thought a good deal of that winder. Nice old lady, Mis' Peternot!"

"Jack! have you been smashing their windows?"

"No!" faltered Jack.

And before he could catch his breath, to enter into explanations, the deacon exclaimed, indignantly, "Where is the squire? I'll see what he means by following up the boy in this way!" And he strode towards the house, more angry than Jack had ever seen him before.

Sellick followed with Jack; and Phin went last, looking strangely excited, if not delighted, and calling to Mr. Pipkin at the barn, "Hurrah, Pip! come and see the fun!"

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE SHOES AND STOCKINGS CAME HOME.

MRS. CHATFORD met her husband at the door, her kind face full of motherly solicitude. "Do tell me, what is the matter! *He* is in the sitting-room. O Jack! I hope you have n't been getting into any serious trouble."

They found the squire sitting stiffly in a straight-backed chair, with his horn-headed cane between his knees, and his hat and an odd-looking bundle on the floor beside him.

"What is all this about, squire?" the deacon demanded, as poor Jack was brought in, face to face with his grim accuser. "Have n't you got through persecuting this boy? I felt that your treatment of him yesterday was wholly unwarrantable, — tyrannical and unjust; and though I thought a little differently of it, after my talk with your nephew last night, still I am not satisfied, and I sha'n't be, till you have done the right thing. That he said you would do; but this don't look like it. What great crime has Jack committed, that you should send an officer of the law after him?"

"You know nothing of what you are sayin'!" replied Peternot. "If you stan' up for the boy arter I've made my statements, you're not the man I take

you for. I believe you to be a respecter of the laws, and no friend of rascality. If you don't believe what I say, there 's my nephew out there in the wagon, ready to corroborate; and if you won't credit our words, peradventur' you 'll be convinced by this."

He took up the odd-looking bundle from the floor, untied the corners of the coarse plaid handkerchief that enclosed it, and pulled out a pair of stockings,



A CONVINCING ARGUMENT.

which he held up and shook before the eyes of the wondering group.

“Do ye know them stockin’s, Mis’ Chatford ?”

“Why — sure — they — they are Jack’s stockings !” said the good woman, sadly puzzled to know how they had come into Peternot’s possession.

“And them shoes, — does anybody recognize ‘em ?”

“They’re Jack’s shoes !” exclaimed Phin, having taken a near view, — “his Sunday pair !”

“Now for this hat,” said the squire, holding it up on the end of his cane, “whose hat is it ? Anybody know the hat ?”

“I believe that and the other things all belong to Jack,” said the deacon. “What is the mystery ? Come to the point at once ! Jack, what is it ? Why don’t you speak ? Have you lost your tongue ?”

The evidence against him appeared so overwhelming, and he really seemed to himself so guilty, — not because he had taken the money, but because he had made use of such means and such companions in accomplishing his object, — that poor Jack could not yet utter an intelligible word in self-defence. He was faltering out some weak denial or excuse, when Peternot interrupted him : —

“If this ain’t enough, pull off the shoes he has on and look at his feet. If you don’t find some marks of rough treatment about the ankles, I miss my calculation.” Sellick placed the culprit in a chair, and began to take off his shoes.

“The mystery is no mystery, Neighbor Chatford,”

the squire went on. "My house was broke into and robbed last night. I ketched one of the thieves by the heels as he was jumpin' from the winder, and these stockin's come off in my hands, as he got away; which he did by the help of his accomplices, though not till his feet and shins got some hard rubs on the winder-sill, as ye can see there now!" — Sellick at that moment holding up one of Jack's legs, variegated with black-and-blue marks and bloody scratches, to the view of his horrified friends.

"I found the hat and shoes under the winder, when I run out arter the burglars. I looked agin with a lantern, and found tracks too big for the shoes, showing he had older confederates. He had two or three with him, at least. I'm glad to learn that Moses is away, so he could n't 'a' been one on 'em; and Phineas, his mother tells me, was in bed by eight o'clock."

"Jack!" said the deacon, fixing a terrible look on the boy.

"I have n't robbed his house!" Jack broke forth, vehemently. "I only took what was my own. I took the money, which he had robbed me of before!"

"Broke into his house for it!"

"I got in."

"Who helped you?"

"I can't tell. It would n't be fair for me to tell."

"Where is the money?" demanded the squire.

"I can't tell that, either. It was my money, and I took it. And I did only what your nephew, who

knows so much about the law, advised me to do, and what Mr. Chatford himself said I would have a right to do."

The deacon, who was inclined to condemn the boy's fault all the more severely because he had taken his part before, regarded him with stern astonishment and displeasure.

"Did I ever say you would have a right to go to house-breaking, to get possession of what you claimed? — Don't think, Squire, that I for a moment encouraged the boy to any such course. I did n't approve *your* course, I tell you frankly. I thought you ought to have used different means for carrying your point. But I don't uphold him. I told him expressly and repeatedly to let the matter drop until this morning, when I would see you about it."

"You said I would be justified in taking the money wherever I could lay hands on it!" cried Jack, now fully roused to speak in his own behalf.

"Boy! Jack!" replied the deacon, regarding him with a look of mingled amazement, grief, and stern reprobation. "Take care what you say! Don't make the matter worse by lying about it."

"You said so — to — to Mrs. Pipkin!" said Jack, trying to remember what he seemed to be trying to invent.

"Did I say anything of the kind to you? Give the boy the benefit of it, if I did," said the deacon, turning to Mrs. Pipkin.

"I did n't hear you," replied that lady, precisely.

" You did n't say as much as I *hoped* you would say ; for you knew I had n't words to express my opinion of Squire Peternot's conduct."

" Good ! " said Mr. Pipkin, in a low but earnest voice, from the kitchen door. " I 'm glad you said that ! "

" And I shall say more, before the matter is settled ! " said Mrs. Pipkin, compressing her thin lips. " For a man like Squire Peternot to come over here, and have Jack taken up for carrying off the money, no matter how he got it, is a sin and a shame ! One of the richest farmers in town, and a member of the church ! I believe you 'd follow a penny rolling down hill to the very edge of Tophet, and burn your fingers getting it out ! "

" Good agin, by hokey ! " said Mr. Pipkin, at the door.

" Silence ! " said the deacon, authoritatively. " Abuse is no argument. I 'm trying to find out what I really said to give Jack encouragement in his iniquity, or to expose his lying."

" Perhaps it was what Mrs. Pipkin said ; he may have got it turned about a little," said Mrs. Chatford, anxiously trying to shield the miserable culprit.

" No, it was n't ! " Jack maintained stoutly. " He said it. I did n't hear him, but Phin did ; Phin came out when I was milking and told me."

All eyes were now turned upon Phin ; and — either because he had intentionally deceived Jack, or because, which is more probable, having confounded

what Mrs. Pipkin said with what his father said, he was afraid to confess the blunder and assume his share of the responsibility — that treacherous-hearted youngster put on an air of outraged innocence, and exclaimed loudly, “O, I never said such a thing! I never said a word to him about it! Hope to die this minute if I did!”

“ You did! you know you did!” And Jack, driven to desperation, advanced, shaking his fist at Phin, and passionately accusing him of falsehood.

“ That will do,” said Deacon Chatford. “ I’ve nothing more to say. His trying to get out of the scrape by lying, and shifting the blame first on to me and then on to somebody else, seems to me worse than the thing itself. He must take the consequences !”

CHAPTER XXI.

JACK IN DISGRACE.

"I s'pose my nag is gitting a little mite impatient," remarked the constable. "Shall we be driving along ? Put on your shoes, sonny ; not your Sunday-go-to-meeting pair ; these and the other things will have to go to court with you, to be put into the evidence."

"Hearken to me one moment !" said Mrs. Chatford, laying one hand protectingly on Jack's shoulder, and holding her husband's arm with the other. "Both of you ! Don't be too hard on this unfortunate boy ! You know, husband, how he came to us ; he was the victim of a false accusation then. Appearances are often deceitful. Remember, Squire Peternot, how you were once on the point of having his dog shot for a fault which another dog had committed. We are all liable, under the most favorable circumstances, — sometimes — to make mistakes."

"If you think there is any mistake here, Mis' Chatford," answered the squire, "I must say you show a failin' judgment."

"I don't doubt his taking the money. And I don't approve of the course he took to get it, either. But forgive me if I say I think you drove him to it. It's the old story over again, — the rich man with large flocks and herds taking the poor man's one little

lamb. Much as I condemn him for breaking into your house, I'd rather at this moment be in his place than in yours, Squire Peternot!"

"Wife! wife!" expostulated the deacon, mildly; while Peternot stood silently champing the bit of mortified pride and resentment.

"I hope to be pardoned here and hereafter, if I speak anything unjustly or in anger," Mrs. Chatford went on; "but I must say what is in my heart. The boy has done wrong; but consider, he is but a boy. Think what he was when he was brought here, what bad influences had been about him all his life, and then acknowledge that he has turned out better than could ever have been expected of him. He has been steady, industrious, truthful, well behaved,—as good as most boys who have had the best of training. And now to cast him off for one offence," appealing to her husband; "you will regret it as long as you live, if you do! And for you," turning again to the squire, "at your years, with your wealth, and your knowledge of our blessed Saviour's teachings, to drive this poor, ignorant child to transgress the law in the maintenance of his rights, in the first place, and then to execute the vengeance of the law upon him without mercy,—as I said before, I'd rather be in his place, in the eyes of Heaven, than in yours!"

Jack, who had stood sullen, despairing, full of hatred and a sense of wrong, a minute before, burst into a wild fit of sobbing and weeping at the sound of these gracious words. The deacon was touched;

and even Phin looked conscience-smitten,—white about the mouth, and scared and excited about the eyes,—as he thought of his share in Jack's disgrace.

"Mrs. Chatford," said Mrs. Pipkin, wiping her tears with her apron, "you've spoken my sentiment, and you've spoken it better than I could, because you're a better woman!"

"So she has, by hokey!" added the sincere Mr. Pipkin.

"I wish you could be prevailed upon to let the matter rest at present, squire," said the deacon. "The boy has certainly done well, since he has been with us, till this unfortunate affair came up."

"You have n't known him!" said Peternot, striking his heavy cane upon the floor. "What's bred in the bone will stay long in the flesh. You can't wash a black sheep white in a day. He can put on a smooth outside, but he's corrupt at heart as he ever was. If you could have been present with him in the woods yesterday! I never heard such profanity from the lips of mortal man!"

"Jack!" said the deacon, "do you swear?"

"I swore at him; he was robbing me; I could n't help it, he made me so mad!" Jack acknowledged.

"Then his leaguing himself with midnight marauders, whose names he is ashamed to confess, shows what he is!" continued Peternot. "A boy is known by the company he keeps."

"Isn't a man as much?" retorted Jack, blazing up again. "What company did you keep yesterday?

What *day* marauders did you league yourself with, to get the money away from me? Wonder if you are ashamed!"

"Jack! Jack! don't be saucy!" said Mrs. Chatford.

"Let him speak out; then mebby you'll see what the boy is," said Peternot, chafing with anger. "He has no respect for age. He sassed me to my face yesterday as you never heard the lowest blackguard on the canal sass another. I am amazed that anybody in this house should be found to excuse or stand up for such a profane, house-breakin', hardened little villain!"

"I don't stand up for anything he has said or done that is wrong. But there is good in the boy, for all that," cried Mrs. Chatford, in tones and with looks full of deep emotion, "and that I stand up for, as I would wish another to stand up for a son of mine in his place. This may be a turning-point in the boy's life. He may be saved, he can and will be saved, if we are just and charitable towards him; but I shudder to think what may become of him if we cast him off. I fear he will go back to his old ways, and that his last state will be worse than his first. Then who will be answerable for his soul?"

"I have no ill-feelin' towards the boy," said the squire, coming now to a subject which he had been waiting for a favorable moment to introduce. "And if he will show that he repents of his inikity by askin' pardon for his wholesale blasphemy, and abuse

of me in the woods yesterday, and — and — give up the plunder he took from my house last night,— I don't know,— peradventur' I may be prevailed upon to let him off."

"What do you say to that, Jack?" asked the deacon, anxious to see the matter settled. "Come! show yourself a brave, honest boy now, and the squire won't be too hard on you. Give up the money, and he'll return a fair share of it to you, I'm confident, — all you could reasonably expect, after the course you have taken to get the whole; won't you, squire?"

"Sartin, I'll be liberal with him; though I can't make any bargain with a malefactor till he names his accomplices and gives up his booty."

"And recant your falsehood about Phineas; that has hurt me more than anything else," added Mr. Chatford, as Jack was hesitating.

"How can I recant what was n't a falsehood?" replied Jack.

"Take care, take care, boy!" said the deacon, warningly. "Stand here face to face with Phineas. Now, did Phineas tell you I said you would be justified in taking that money wherever you could find it? — Did you say anything of the sort, Phineas?"

"No, I never opened my lips to him about it!" said Phin, with all the vehemence of earnest innocence. "But mabby he imagined I did."

"I did n't imagine it!" cried Jack. "Phin Chatford, you know you said it! You are lying at this minute, if you say you did n't."

"Jack, what motive could Phineas have to say such a thing to you in the first place, or to lie about it now? Your story is untrustworthy, on the face of it. And I beg of you to consider again; for I can do nothing for you, if you persist with a lie on your lips."

"It is n't a lie. If I say I lied then, I shall be lying now."

"I have nothing more to say. Squire, I leave him to you." And the deacon walked mournfully away.

"If saying I am sorry I swore yesterday in the woods will do any good," Jack continued, "I'll say it, for I am sorry. I had made up my mind never to swear again; and I never should, but you drove me to it."

"Stubborn and hardened to the last!" said Peter-not. "He is bound to find some excuse for his conduct, somebody to shift the blame on to. Still I accept his apology, such as it is. And now, if he will give up his ill-got plunder—"

"Plunder!" echoed Jack. "Was it *your* ill-got plunder when you took it away from me? It is my money; but I wish now I had never seen it, for a thousand times as much could n't pay me for what I have lost! She has lost faith in me,"—looking through his streaming tears at the retreating form of Mrs. Chatford, following her husband from the room,—"and I can never again be in this house what I have been. But I can't give up the money; I have n't got it, and I don't know where it is."

"But you know who has it?" Jack would not reply to this or to any other question tending to bring out the names of his accomplices; and the squire, losing patience at last, exclaimed, "Well, Sellick! I see no use of dallyin' any longer here."

"He has n't had his breakfast yet," said Mrs. Pipkin. "You'll give him a chance to eat something, I guess!" her eyes sparkling as she glanced from Sellick to the squire.

"O, sartin!" said Sellick. "I never thought of that, having had a bite myself 'fore I started. I believe in a full stumick. Come, sonny! snatch a bite; you'll feel better."

But Jack was too full of grief to think of food. "I shall never eat anything in this house again!" he exclaimed, with short, convulsive sobs.

Upon this, little Kate, who had been looking on with wonder and sympathy, not understanding what the dreadful trouble was, ran up to him, and threw her arms about him, exclaiming passionately, "O Jack! you will! you must! I love you, if nobody else does! But we all do! You mustn't go away! You have been better to me than my own brothers; they plague me, but you never do!—O Mr. Peternot! he ain't a bad boy; Jack ain't bad! Don't take him off to jail!"

But there was no help for the poor lad then. Peternot was inexorable. Jack made no resistance. Mrs. Chatford, returning from a last fruitless appeal to her husband, kissed him tenderly, and said what com-

forting words she could. Mrs. Pipkin put something into his pocket, as she bent over him ; and Mr. Pipkin told him to keep a stiff upper lip. Kate clung to him with affection and wild grief. But Mr. Chatford did not come to bid him good by ; and he did not say good by to Phineas.

CHAPTER XXII.

JACK AND THE JOLLY CONSTABLE.

So Jack left the home and friends that for a brief season had been so pleasant and dear to him, and went out to take leave of another and older friend.



GOOD BY, OLD FRIEND !

This was Lion. He hugged and kissed the poor, faithful, affectionate creature; then, sending him to his kennel, he said to Kate, "See that he is taken good care of, won't you? I — if I never —" But here he choked and could say no more.

"Come along, sonny," said Sellick.

They walked on to the length of fence where the constable's horse was hitched, mounted the wagon, and rode away, watched by more than one troubled and tearful face in the farm-house door.

Mrs. Pipkin set about her work with more than the usual fury which distinguished her on Monday mornings; while Mr. Pipkin went out to finish the milking Jack had begun.

Phin chained Lion to his kennel, saying guiltily to himself, "I ain't to blame for his going to jail; I did n't mean to lie; but I don't care! folks were getting to think more of him than they do of me; and now I've got his dog!" Still his sense of triumph was no more like happiness than roiled and troubled waters are like some pure crystal fountain.

Mr. Chatford walked from the house to the barn and back again, and about the yard and stables, in an absent-minded way, frowning, and looking strangely uneasy in his mind. His wife, in the mean while, tried to forget her grief and anxiety in doing something for poor Jack,—packing a portmanteau of such clothes as she thought he would need if he went to jail, putting in a few books, a pin-cushion, a box of Mrs. Pipkin's cookies, which he was fond of, and

some cakes of maple-sugar, besides many little things for his comfort, or to remind him that he still had a friend.

"Now, husband!" she said, calling the deacon in to breakfast, "this must go to the Basin at once, or it may be too late. Shall Mr. Pipkin take it, or will you?"

"O, well, I suppose I will! Peternot said he would like to have me go over and identify the shoes and things; but I hate to! Strange the boy should have stuck to his lies so!" exclaimed the dissatisfied deacon. "There's nothing I would n't have done for him, if he'd shown a proper spirit." And he sat down to eat a hurried breakfast before starting for the Basin. "I don't see how the boy is going to get out of this scrape!"

"The best way I know o' gittin out of a bad scrape," remarked Mr. Pipkin, entering just then, "an' it's a way I've tried many a time —"

"How's that?" asked the deacon.

"It's to wake up, an' find it's all a dream," replied Mr. Pipkin.

"Ah! I guess Jack would be glad enough to wake up and find this a dream, money and all!" said the deacon.

Sellick meanwhile, as he drove away with his prisoner, beguiled the time with pleasant talk.

"Don't you think you've been a little too hard on our good neighbor Peternot? You should n't try to git money away from a poor man like him, even if

't is yours. A very poor man, the squire! I don't suppose he's wuth more 'n fifteen or twenty thousand dollars; and what's that? If he had a hundred thousand, he'd still be the poorest man in town; for he hain't got anything else but money and property to speak of. That's what makes a man poor. Now, there's Mr. and Mis' Chatford, they would be rich with barely enough to live on. You might have robbed them, and no harm. But a poor old couple like the Peternots, for shame! Then you must consider, the squire has n't had the advantages of society, and a good bringing-up, and the light of the Gospil, and edication, that you've had. You ought to pity him, and forgive him. Good old man, the squire!"

In the midst of his wrongs and grief, Jack's keen sense of humor was tickled by these facetious remarks, while their undertone of truth and friendliness warmed his heart.

" You've heard a good deal about his son Paul," Sellick went on,— " a hard case, Paul. His great mistake was, he thought it his duty to be spending some of the money the old man was laying up. He could n't see the use of a great heap of gold stored away, and no good times at home; solid sunshine in the bank vaults, and gloom in the kitchen. So he went wild. The squire whipped him once, for calling him a fool, after he got to be twenty years old; tied him up to an apple-tree; I was going by, and heard the rumpus. ' Call yer father a fool, will ye? when ye ought to say venerable father!' says the old man, and

lays on the lash. Every five or six strokes he'd stop and bawl out agin, 'Call yer father a fool, will ye ? when ye ought to say venerable father !' Then, whack ! whack ! whack ! 'Call yer father a fool, will ye ?' over and over, till I got out of hearing. Not long after that the spendthrift son and the venerable father parted. Paul took to gambling for a living, and drinking for amusement,—business and pleasure combined. You brought the last news of him to town,—how he went to bed drunk one night at Wiley's Basin, and set his room on fire, and was burnt to death, and you afterwards got his dog, that was singed trying to save his master. One would have thought the old man would feel a kindness towards you and the dog now, but—he's a *poor man*, as I said. Paul's bad end seemed to cut him up a good deal for a while, but now he's taken home his nephew in his place. A plucky chap, the nephew ! There's courage for you ! Me and you now would n't want to go and live with—with such poor folks, ye know, and feed our souls on the old man's hard corned beef and the old lady's vinegar, not for any length of time, just in the hope of coming into their money when they die,—would we ? Not that I wish to breathe a word agin the Peternots ; dear me, no ! Best kind of folks in their way, though mebby their way is a leetle mite peculiar. Hullo ! there's some of your folks !"

"It's Mose !" said Jack, his heart swelling with a tumult of emotions as he thought of all that had hap-

pened since he watched Annie and her cousin disappear in the direction from which they were now returning.

"The schoolmarm with him, ain't it? A re'l perty face! See! they know you. Shall we stop and talk?"

"No,—yes. O, I wish we hadn't met them!" said Jack, wondering how he could bear to tell his dearest friend of the trouble and danger he was in, and take leave of her, in such a situation.

"Say nothing; I'll make it all right," said Sellick.—"Good morning, good morning, Mose! Good morning, Miss Felton. You're having an early ride this morning; good for the appetite; makes rosy cheeks. Me and Jack's riding out a little for our health too."

"It makes his eyes red, if not his cheeks," said Moses. "Where ye bound, Jack?"

"I'm going over to the Basin; Mr. Sellick asked me to ride," replied Jack, with a smile. "They'll tell you all about it at the house."

"Can't talk now; there's Squire Peternot in the buggy close behind us," observed Sellick. "He'll complain of us for blocking the highway, if we keep two wagons standing abreast here when he wants to pass. Fresh for your school agin, hey, Miss Felton, this bright Monday morning? I wish we could keep you the year round. My little shavers never learned so fast or liked to go to school so well as they have this summer."

"I could n't walk through the snow-drifts, to say nothing of governing the big boys," replied Annie.

"I'll risk the big boys!" cried Sellick. "You'd bring them to your feet, like so many whipped spaniels. Then you'll have some smart boys on your side, to start with,—Moses, and Jack here.—You'll go to school, I suppose, next winter?"

"If I am here; I had meant to," faltered Jack. While Annie's searching eyes seemed to look into his troubled heart.

"Jack! what is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"He may have engagements elsewhere," said Sellick. "In fact, a little matter of business which he is too modest to mention,—that's what takes us to the Basin, and it may lead to his accepting a situation. I have n't time to explain. Good morning!" And the constable whipped up his horse just as the squire's came close behind.

"Good by!" said Jack, as bravely as he could. Then, his grief mastering him again, as he thought how different life would be to him this pleasant morning if he had gone home with Annie in Moses's place, as he might have done, he set his lips and teeth hard, pulled his hat fiercely over his eyes, and rode on, in his bodily form, to the Basin; while his mind travelled back, and witnessed in imagination the scene at the house, when Miss Felton and Moses should arrive and learn of his crime and his disgrace.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BEFORE JUDGE GARTY.

SELLICK drove down the main street of the village, past the blacksmith-shop, the meeting-house, and the tavern, and turned up to a hitching-post near the canal. Just beyond was the high bridge, beneath which a line-boat was passing. A wild impulse seized Jack,—to run for his freedom, and return to his old life among the rude boatmen; for anything seemed to him better than going to jail. But Sellick said quietly, “I set a good deal by you, sonny. I want to keep you close by my side, for a few hours anyway. Don’t think of parting company with me; I could n’t possibly bear you out of my sight.”

“If you were in my place, wouldn’t you want to part company?” said Jack.

“Naterally. And if you was in mine, you’d feel as I do. Now I take it you’re a sensible boy; and you know you are only a boy; while I have twice the strength, and can run twice as fast as you can. I don’t want to be obliged to tie ye; so I hope you’ll be quiet, while we are about town together. Set in the wagon now, while I hitch the hoss.”

So Jack remained in the wagon, and carefully watched the situation, determined to miss no opportunity of escape that might possibly occur. The

wagon was standing before a grocery, on the corner of the street and the canal. On the other side of the canal was another grocery, of the lowest description, where he had more than once seen his former master, Jack Berrick, fill his whiskey jug or stand and drink at the bar. Near by were some old canal stables, about the doors of which three or four drivers were currying their horses, swearing and joking. He could hear their rough language to their horses and each other, and he thought, "O, I can't go back and be one of them ! But I'll get away if I can."

Judge Garty's office was in the second story of the building before which Sellick hitched his horse. "Good arrangement," remarked the jovial constable. "Boat hands and town loafers git drunk and break the peace in the grocery down stairs ; take 'em to be fined or committed, before the judge up stairs. A very good business plan."

"I should think," said Jack, "'t would be hard to get a drunken man up that narrow flight ; 't would be more convenient if the judge had his office in one corner of the grocery."

"A very good notion ; I'll suggest it to him," said Sellick. "Come now, sonny ! Re'ly, you must excuse me for calling you sonny ; it comes so handy."

The "narrow flight" to which Jack alluded was a staircase built up to the second story on the outside of the building. Up this the lame Peternot and his nephew went first ; then came Jack and the

constable, who stood on the upper landing, while the squire, in a narrow entry beyond, shook and pounded a door which appeared to be either locked or bolted.

"He ain't here!" exclaimed the old man, impatiently.

But just as Jack, keenly watching everything, began to hope that some advantage to him might grow out of the absence of the magistrate, Sellick exclaimed, "There he is, over the way! He sees us."

On the opposite corner was a country store and forwarding-house, with one side on the street and the other on the canal; from the door of which Jack saw a short-legged man hurrying towards them across the way. He mounted the stairs, passed Jack and the constable, and unlocked with a key from his pocket the door which Peternot had been shaking. As he led the way into the office, Jack, who noticed everything, noticed that the key was left sticking in the lock on the outside.

"Good morning. Walk in, gentlemen," said the judge. And, seating himself before a sloping desk placed on a common pine table, he laid off his hat, exposing a big, bald head, adorned by a couple of light tufts of gray hair over the ears, and put on a pair of steel-bowed glasses, covering a pair of very light-colored and very weak eyes, which had a habit of winking constantly.

"A case of breaking and entering," said Peternot, introducing the business. "As 't was my house that

was robbed, and as I am the complainant, I thought it best to have the prisoner brought before you."

The judge winked many times at Jack through his glimmering glasses, examined Sellick's warrant, winking hard over that too, and prepared to write. By this time several village loungers, with their usual keen scent for a criminal case, began to throng the room.

Peternot, being sworn, stated circumstantially how, on the previous evening, he had been interrupted during prayer-time by burglars breaking into his house, and had caught one by the heels as he was leaping from a window, and so forth. The bundle of clothes left behind was displayed; and Jack's legs were about to undergo examination, when he saved the court that trouble by frankly confessing himself the person who had been caught.

"The clothes have been identified by the Chatfords," said the squire. "They will also, if necessary, be sworn to by them, when the case comes up for trial. So any further evidence with regard to them might be dispensed with, since he has confessed his crime; though I told the deacon he might be wanted here as a witness, and I'm expectin' him every minute. My nephew will corroborate my testimony."

"Very well, as a mere formality; though your testimony is sufficient."

Byron Dinks having given his evidence, in the presence of an ever-increasing crowd of spectators, the judge turned to Jack, winking extraordinarily hard at him; and said, "The complaint against you,

I suppose you are aware, is of a very grave character. Is there any statement you wish to make?"

Winked at by the weak-eyed judge, stared at by the group of idle spectators, and frowned upon by the relentless Peternot, Jack, standing at Sellick's right hand beside the desk, clutched the table with his nervous fingers, caught his breath quickly, and answered in a frank, firm voice, "All I have to say is, that the money I took belongs to me more than it does to him; and I believed I had a right to it. I found it in an old rotten log; and he had robbed me of it before I took it from him. I did n't think it was house-breaking when I got into his window; the window was open; it was broken accidentally when I was getting the money out."

"I'll say here," interposed Peternot, "what I've said to the boy before, that if he will give up his booty and name his accomplices,—though I know pertly well who they be,—I'll accept his apology, and withdraw my complaint."

"That's a fair proposition," said Judge Garty, "and both as a friend and a magistrate I advise you to take up with it. You are young; there appear to be really some extenuating circumstances in the case, and it seems hard that you should be punished."

"It is hard!" said Jack, his voice heaving, but not breaking. "I never had a chance for myself till just a few weeks ago; and I meant to make the most of it,—I meant to do right, and be honest and true; and now this is what it comes to! But I can't give

up what he calls my booty." His eyes flashed out proudly and defiantly: there was something in his look that said, "I can be wronged, I can be trampled on, but I won't give in to the tyrant!" "If the money is what he wants of me, he won't get it. I'll go to jail, if I must."

The magistrate winked, the spectators stared, and Peternot frowned, harder than ever. After writing a few words, Judge Garty looked up again and said, "I don't see but what I shall have to bind you over."

Jack, who had never heard the legal term before, turned to Sellick with a bewildered look. "Bind me over? I haven't been bound at all yet!"

There was a general titter at his expense; and Sellick laughingly replied: "He means, you must give bonds; that is, get somebody to pledge a certain sum of money that you won't run away, but that you'll appear for trial when your case comes up before the county court."

"I know!" said Jack, blushing. "That's what you call bailing a fellow."

"Exac'ly! Now if you can git bail, you'll be let off till you're wanted for trial. But if you can't, you must stand committed,—that is, go to jail and wait there till you're wanted."

Judge Garty conferred in low tones with Squire Peternot,—whom Jack overheard to mutter, "Hardened little wretch! desperate character!" and then announced that he had fixed the amount of the required bonds at five hundred dollars.

"Do you know anybody who will be security for you?" he asked, winking at the prisoner.

Jack thought of Mr. Chatford,—but Mr. Chatford had lost faith in him, and could not be expected now to show him any favors. So he answered, faintly, "No, sir." And the judge resumed his writing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PRISONER'S CUP OF MILK.

THE prisoner looked anxiously at the door, and about the room, and after a little reflection said to the constable, "I'm kind of hungry. Can't I have some breakfast?"

"Where's the lunch Mis' Pipkin tucked into your pocket?" said Sellick. "Here it is, all right. She knew you would come to your appetite."

Jack had hoped to be taken down into the grocery, and at the moment he did not thank Mrs. Pipkin for her kindness.

"Can't I have something to drink with it?" he asked. "They have milk in the grocery; I can pay for a cupful." And he took from his pocket the solitary half-dollar, which was all the riches he could command, out of the hoard of treasure he had found so lately, and lost, and regained, and perhaps lost again forever.

"Here, sonny!" said Sellick to a boy in the crowd (every boy was "sonny" to him), "take this money and go down into the grocery and buy a cup of milk, and bring back the change, and you shall have a penny for your trouble. And be spry, for we must eat our breakfast while the judge is making out his papers."

The lad took the money and, pushing through the crowd of loungers, passed the door, and went down the outside stairs at a rattling pace, the sound of which filled the heart of the waiting prisoner with envy.

Jack looked about him, nibbling his dry biscuit and butter, and saw that there was only one other door in the room, and that it was nailed, with a bar across it. There were three windows, one on the side of the street near the entry door, the other two overlooking the canal. He was still nibbling and studying the premises, when the lad returned.

"I hope this ain't canal milk," said Jack with a laugh, as he pocketed the change and took the cup, after giving the lad his penny. "They sell horrid stuff to the boats sometimes,—mostly chalk and canal-water, I believe." He poised the cup, still munching the dry biscuit, and glanced furtively at the door. The loungers had not yet begun to leave, and there was a crowd in the way.

Sellick was saying to a village acquaintance, "I never yit lost a prisoner, and I never expect to lose one; and I never yit was afraid to take a man. Not one in fifty can run as fast as I can, and once I git holt of a chap, I jest freeze to him; 't would take a perty good set of muscles to shake me off, and a mighty long head to outwit me.—Come, sonny, drink yer milk; judge is shaking the sand on his paper."

Jack lifted the cup to his lips, and began to drink, but stopped suddenly, and, with his mouth full and

his cheeks distended, made sounds and motions of distress, as if about to eject the liquid.

"Sour?" cried Sellick.

"'M! 'm!" said Jack, through his nose; and with milk spilling from the cup and spitting from his lips, he started for a window; while the crowd, laughing at his ludicrous plight, and anxious to avoid a sprinkling, made way before him.

It was the window on the side of the street, and it was closed. While Sellick, laughing with the rest, was stepping quickly to help him open it, Jack, beginning to choke, and appearing quite unable to control himself longer, started for the door. The mirthful constable—who had never yet lost a prisoner and never expected to lose one—turned to follow him, rather leisurely, pausing to laugh at Mr. Byron Dinks, who had received some conspicuous splashes of milk on his black broadcloth.

Jack took hold of the door, as if to steady himself, then, in an instant, darting through, pulled it after him (just missing Sellick's fingers), turned the key on the outside, went down the stairway with flying leaps, and ran as for his life; leaving court, constable, witnesses, and spectators locked up in the room together, prisoners in his place, with abundant leisure to find something to laugh at besides him and his spilled milk!

CHAPTER XXV.

JACK'S PRISONERS.

WEAK-EYED Judge Garty, having sanded the warrant by which Jack was to have been conveyed to jail, and winked hard over it for about fifteen seconds (giving at least six winks to the second) to see that it was all right, shook it in the air at the empty space occupied a moment before by the jolly constable.

"Here! Sellick! where are you? Here's our *mittimus*," he was saying, when occurred the pleasant little catastrophe related in our last chapter.

The room was filled with confusion in an instant, sounds of men laughing, crying out, rushing to and fro, and clamoring at door and window.

"What's the matter?" called Squire Peternot, in a loud, stern, voice. "Where's the constable? where's the prisoner?"

"Gone!" answered somebody in the crowd.

"Gone?" cried Judge Garty, rising to his feet, still shaking his paper and winking blindly. "He can't go without our warrant! Sellick knows better'n that!"

"But the boy don't!" cried Sellick, running to the table.

"The boy!" echoed Peternot; "where is he?"

"Gone — got away — took leg-bail," answered several voices at once, in the general tumult. "He's left his hat, though!"

"Why ain't you — why don't somebody — ketch him!" gasped out Peternot, striding towards the door.

"Screw-driver! pair of shears! anything!" said Sellick, searching the table, "to force the lock!"

"The lock? the lock?" said the judge, like one just waking from sleep in a strong light.

"Yes, man!" said Sellick, unable to take an altogether serious view of even so serious a matter; "boy has gone for more milk; 'fraid he would n't find us here when he got back, so he turned the key! Tongs!" And he sprang to the empty fireplace.

Peternot reached the door, and found his nephew, Mr. Byron Dinks, standing beside it in a comical attitude.

"Why don't you open?" cried the squire, putting on his hat.

"Can't open!" answered Byron.

"Stand away then!"

"Can't stand away!"

"What's the reason you can't?" roared the impatient old man, seizing Byron by the shoulder.

"Door is locked — I'm caught — coat-tail shut in! Look out! you'll tear!" said Byron, anxiously holding the hinder part of his garment with one hand, and his uncle's arm with the other.

"I should think ye was all a pack of fools!" exclaimed the squire, pushing on to the now open window, where he found several heads in advance of his own. "Le' me come! make way here! Why don't somebody in the street ketch him?"

"The' ain't nobody in the street!" giggled a youngster, taking in his head to make room for Peternot. "All the loafers are in here!"

Pressing forward, cane in hand, shouting, and thrusting several of the said loafers aside, Peternot reached the window, and, in attempting to put his head out, smashed his hat very neatly and thoroughly over his eyes. Having then with much ado got his head first out of the hat and then out of the window, he began to bellow forth, "Help! ho! fire!" And he whacked the clapboards outside with his stout cane. "Where is everybody?"

The testimony of the youngster as to all the village loafers being locked up in the room, was so near a literal fact, that not until this moment did anybody appear in answer to the cries from the window. But now three or four persons came running over the canal bridge, two or three out of the store opposite, and as many from the tavern up the street; while a fat little man rushed out of the grocery below, and turning up a face, round and red as a newly risen full moon, at the judge's office window, screamed in a hoarse voice, "What's the row up there?"

"Which way did that boy go?" demanded Peternot.

"What boy?" was answered back from the crowd that began to assemble below.

"Sellick's prisoner! Run for him, some of you! He has locked us all in here! Hurry, and let us out! Help! ho!" And again the old man smote the resounding clapboards.

He had put on his hat once more; and now, accidentally knocked off by striking the window-sash, it fell, and meeting the arm and cane as they were rising vigorously to give the clapboards another blow, it flew in the air, sailed down by the corner of the grocery, and alighted softly and gently in the canal.

"Hurry!" repeated the squire, falling into some slight incongruities of speech in consequence of his very great excitement. "Ketch the door! Open the boy! Pick up—heavens and airth!—pick up my hat!"

Some hastened up stairs to the office door, to find that the escaping prisoner had seriously complicated the difficulties of the situation by carrying off the key. Others, dashing around corners, stared up and down the streets, and under the bridge, and up and down the canal, and into various dark places, including a pig-sty, Sellick's wagon-seat, and an old molasses-hogshead half filled with rain water, standing under the eaves, without making any noteworthy discoveries. In the mean while a boatman on a passing scow drew Peternot's hat out of the water with a pike-pole, and reached it to somebody, who

placed it on the wooden head of a short post, well grooved by the friction of cables, where it was left to drip and dry.

"Bring a ladder! a ladder!" vociferated Peternot. The crowd below repeated, "Ladder! ladder!" and ran off in various directions to find one.

And now a man in a buggy was observed whipping his horse rather fast down the main street of the village.

"It's the deacon!" cried Peternot. "May be he has seen him!"

It was Mr. Chatford indeed, who, perceiving signs of commotion at the bridge, urged on old Maje's paces at as high a speed as that tired and faithful animal could well make after his unusual morning's exercise with Mose and Annie Felton, and arrived on the spot just in time to be in the way of four or five ladders that came together from as many different directions. Maje turned to avoid one, and, being hit in the nose by another, backed the buggy upon some boys who were bringing a third. Men at the same time came running with fire-buckets and cries of "Fire!"

At last, after one ladder had been set up and found too short, another was erected in such haste over it that it broke the window, and also came near breaking Peternot's head. And now, just as this mode of egress from the room was established, Sellick succeeded in forcing the obstinate lock. This was hardly done when a ragged little shaver in the street,

who had been trying for a long while to tell his little story, managed to make himself heard.

"I feen him wun and fow fumfin in here!" placing his little hand on one of the lower hoops of the aforesaid molasses-hogshead, to enforce his meaning,—that he had seen Jack run and throw something in there.

This speech being at last understood and partly credited, the hogshead was tipped and the water emptied out; and there, sure enough, was Judge Garty's office-door key, found just after the lock was forced and the useless ladder was sent crashing against the unlucky window.

But the child could give no information as to the way the fugitive had gone. Neither could Deacon Chatford, who now heard with astonishment how Jack had outwitted the witty constable, and turned the key on the court.

"The rogue!" said the deacon. "He ought not to have taken such a desperate course as that!" Yet somehow he was n't sorry. Riding over to the Basin, he had been greatly disturbed in his mind at the thought of Jack's going to jail, and had seriously questioned whether it was not his duty to offer bail for him. He was a kind-hearted man, as we know; but he had lost faith in the boy's integrity; and it was a relief to him to learn that the question of bail was settled. "Why, Sellick!" he cried, "what have you been about?"

The lately imprisoned crowd came laughing down

the stairway to the street, Sellick laughing with the rest, though rather foolishly. He carefully folded Judge Garty's warrant, and stuck it into the lining of his hat, remarking, "'It may come in play some time,' as the stingy man said when he laid away the bad egg in his cupboard." Then stooping to pick up a bruised tin cup which lay at the foot of the stairs, "That's an honest boy, deacon! He paid for the milk, and he left the cup.—This belongs to you, I believe," handing it to the little fat grocer. "It looks like a good cup, and the milk may have been good milk, but the boy, I'm free to say, did n't seem to be satisfied with it.—Now what's to be done, squire? There's no use crying for the article arter it's spilt, ye know."

The bareheaded old man strode past him, frowning prodigiously, and, taking his hat from the post, all wet as it was, put it on.

"Get track of your prisoner and take him!" he said impatiently. "What do ye stand dawdling here for? Somebody must have seen him!"

That was true enough. Reports were even then coming in of a youth whom women washing at their back doors had observed leaping fences and running fast across gardens and fields, away from the village. And now came shouts from down the canal, which drew the whole crowd in that direction.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OWNER OF THE POTATO PATCH, AND HIS DOG.

PASSING the corner of the block, where he dropped Judge Garty's key into the hogshead of water, Jack slipped into a short, narrow alley, and turned down a back street which brought him quickly to the shore of a broad mill-pond, where it stopped. He then took to the fields.

He got on very well until, as he was crossing a potato patch, he saw, only a few rods ahead of him, a man going up from the shore of the pond, followed by a savage-looking dog. It was our old acquaintance and Jack's enemy, Duffer,* a thick-set, red-faced, black-whiskered teamster, almost the last man Jack would have wished at that moment to encounter.

He stopped running, but kept on at a fast walk, still hoping to pass the man and his dog without trouble. He was bareheaded, having left his hat behind in the court-room. That circumstance was alone sufficient to excite attention ; and Duffer looked sharply at him.

" Go back there ! "

" I 'm in a hurry, I can't go back," said Jack, continuing to walk on.

* See JACK HAZARD AND HIS FORTUNES, Chapters XXIII. and XXIV.

" You 're on my land ! you can't cross here ! "

" I can cross farther up, then."

" No, ye can't !" said Duffer, brandishing a long black whip which he had been trailing behind him. " I owns this 'ere land, from the pond to the street. Go back the way you come, or I lets my dorg on to ye ! "

" I want to pass, and it 's as far going back to get off your land as it is going on," said Jack, anxiously ; for he could hear the shouts in the village, and he feared that pursuers were already on his track.

" You don't cross this 'ere tater patch !" said Duffer, furiously. " I know ye ! Ye had a hand in killing my t' other dorg ! "

" No, I did n't," said Jack. " He was killed in a fair fight with my dog,—ask Grodson ! Let me go on, and I never 'll set foot on your land again."

And he was going on. Then the ruffian said, " The dorg 'll take ye ! Look alive, Bull ! "

Jack, growing desperate, screamed back, " Let your whelp come !" and turned to face the brute.

" Sick !" said Duffer, cracking his whip, and the dog started.

Jack had in his hand a slender stick which he had picked up crossing the fields. Duffer laughed at it. " My dorg wou't mind a switch like that ! Go in, Bull ! "

But Jack had no thought of defending himself by striking blows with so slight a weapon. His long

experience on the canal had taught him, as he afterwards said, "a trick worth two of that."

Boldly facing the cur as he came bounding towards him, he grasped the stick firmly near the ends with both hands, and, lifting it horizontally, held it before him, about as high as his breast. Bull, as Jack had expected, leaped up and seized it with his teeth; in which exposed position he received full in his stomach so sudden and well-directed a kick from Jack's



"A TRICK WORTH TWO OF THAT."

heavy farm-shoe, that he loosed his hold and rolled over, yelping, on the ground.

"Sick him ! go in ! tear him !" roared Duffer, running to the rescue.

The "dorg," however, had had his courage quite kicked out of him with his breath, and nothing could induce him to renew the attack. Whining and limping, or rather crawling, he slunk back to his master, who gave him another fierce command to "go in" and "sick," and lastly a sharp cut with the snake-like lash, which merely sent him yelping in the opposite direction. Then Duffer, infuriated, advanced upon Jack, flourishing his whip, exactly in the way the boy had persisted in going.

Jack thereupon turned back. Duffer followed him. Jack began to run, and then Duffer began to run. Jack went tumbling over the fences, and Duffer went tumbling over the fences after him. Jack ran for liberty at first, but soon he began to run from the whip ; while at each moment, as he gave signs of failing courage, Duffer's rage and thirst for vengeance increased ; for nothing so excites the valorous fury of your genuine bully, as the appearance of faint-heartedness in a foe.

Beyond the street, Jack kept the shore of the pond where it swept around towards the canal. He now regretted not having taken that course in the first place, yet he had avoided it for a good reason ; there was the waste-wear in his way.

The "heel-path" side of the canal was narrowed

here to a high and steep embankment; into this was set a waste-gate in a frame of strong timbers; and over the gate and the timbers the canal poured its surplus waters in a shining cascade that fell into the pond below. This was the waste-wear, crossed by a single foot-plank, in full view of the village and of the canal, for half a mile up and down. Quite near the gate, its arched top visible at the base of the embankment, was a culvert for the pond water, which there flowed under the canal into a mill-race on the other side.

Towards this conspicuous if not very dangerous place, the hatless Jack, driven back by Duffer, now ran with all his might. Once across the waste-wear, he could still hope to baffle pursuit in the orchards and woods beyond. But Duffer was too swift for him; and, feeling his own strength giving out, and the avenger of the "dorg" fast gaining on him, Jack stooped and caught up from the flat, goose-nibbled and goose-trampled pond-shore the only available missile in sight. Then, like David defying the giant of Gath, he turned, with upraised, menacing arm.

"Come on," he cried, "and I send this at your head!"

It could not have proved a very formidable projectile, being nothing but a dirty goose-egg, but it served his purpose for the moment; Goliath, mistaking it for a stone, stopped and prepared to dodge or retreat.

"Don't ye chuck that rock at me! I'll drownd ye in that water if ye do!"

"Keep your distance, then," commanded Jack, backing off.

He used often to laugh, in later years, at the ludicrous spectacle of the big-whiskered ruffian brought to a stand and put in fear by a goose-egg; but he had no leisure for laughing at the time. For now the uproar in the village, which had seemed to be subsiding, burst forth afresh in sudden cries of "Ketch him! ketch that boy!" and, looking quickly around, he saw a scattered crowd of men and youngsters running out of the village directly towards him.

Then Jack felt that his chance of escape was small; his breath was spent, and here were fresh pursuers on his track! In his rage, remembering that he might now have been a mile away had it not been for Duffer, he paused, before once more taking to flight, and discharged the goose-egg at his enemy. Long practice with pebbles and stones on the tow-path, in the days when he was a driver, had made him a good shot; wrath nerved his arm; the mark was near, and by no means small; and the result was satisfactory. He whirled and ran, leaving Duffer half stunned, staggering and spluttering and spitting, mouth, beard, and bosom variegated and dripping with the mixed yellow and white of the egg, which had struck and burst, like a bombshell, full in his face.

Jack felt that the egg was suspiciously light, and anybody within half a dozen rods might have heard it *pop*; but it was Duffer who had the strongest evidence of the vile and gassy character of its contents. Blowing and snorting, he rushed down to the pond in order to purify himself, while Jack fled.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RACE, AND HOW IT ENDED.

THE crowd came streaming out of the back streets of the village, not less than twenty or thirty men and boys, some intent on joining in the chase, while the rest were actuated only by an eager desire to witness the sport. It was not often that the lees of life in the quiet Basin were stirred by so exciting an incident as the locking up of a court-room full of town officials and idle spectators, and the escape of a prisoner ; and it was natural that a lively interest should be felt in the end of the little romance.

About half the crowd, thinking Duffer had received a terrible wound in the head (mistaking the yolk of the egg for blood), ran down to the pond-side, where they found a large flock of geese already gathered about him, hissing and cackling at him, with out-stretched necks, in a noisy and vivacious fashion, while he scraped and washed himself, and with occasional angry dashes tried to drive them away. The rest of the crowd followed Jack ; and soon those who had drawn near the disabled combatant, perceiving the comical character of his injuries, turned laughing away, with the geese, and hurried to enjoy the more exciting scene at the waste-gate.

Among Jack's pursuers was one who, although a

little later at the start than many, soon by diligent use of his legs and arms worked his way into the foremost rank, and at last took the lead. This was Sellick. If not absolutely the best runner of the crowd, he had certainly the best reasons for running. He had not only lost a prisoner, but lost him under peculiar and ludicrous circumstances. And although the jolly constable was a great joker himself, he did not surpassingly relish a joke of which he was the victim. He was well aware that the fact of his having been outgeneralled by a boy would be cherished as a standing jest against him as long as he lived ; but if he could retort, that he secured the runaway, and after all took him to jail, that would be some comfort. So he put forth his strength, and tried the speed of his limbs ; doing then and there such extraordinary running, in the sight of the huzzaing and laughing villagers, that it passed into a proverb, and I remember hearing many years after an old farmer say of a cow that once got away from him as he was leading her home, "She run like Sellick arter Jack Hazard!"

Much of the huzzaing, I am happy to record, was for Jack. Men naturally sympathize with the weaker party in a struggle, provided they have no personal interest in it. Peternot was by no means popular ; few cared for Sellick, except as a wag, whom it was fun to see circumvented ; while, on the other hand, there was a general feeling that Jack, by his shrewdness and spirit, well deserved his freedom. So those

who were first in the chase finally gave it up, and fell back as spectators, leaving to the constable alone the glory of recapturing his prisoner.

"Go it, little one! Put in, limber legs!" came to Jack's ears across the corner of the pond, with many an encouraging shout and loud laugh. "Streak it! leg it! You'll win!"

But there were many remarks of a less cheering nature, which he did not hear.

"It's no use! Sellick'll have him 'fore he gets to the waste-wear!" said a shoemaker who had just left his bench and run out with his leather apron on.

"If he could only cross the waste-wear and pull up the plank behind him!" observed the tavern-keeper.

"He can't do that; plank is spiked down," replied a young journeyman carpenter. "But he might pitch Sellick off as he goes to cross after him,— if he only had a long pole!"

"He's about beat out; see how Sellick gains on him!" cried Byron Dinks, clapping his hands. "He'll have him! he'll have him!"

"I declare, it seems too bad!" said Deacon Chafford, coming down to the shore. "Poor Jack! he has said so much about having a chance for himself, and now!"

"He has no chance with Sellick!" exclaimed Byron Dinks, gleefully. "He's got him! He's headed him off! He's— Oh!"

The deacon echoed, "Oh!" and the throng of spec-

tators broke forth in a chorus of excited *oh's* and *ah's*, and other exclamations of astonishment.

What had happened was this.

Jack, finding himself no match for the constable, believed that his only hope lay in reaching the canal and crossing to the tow-path. Being a good swimmer, he might gain some slight advantage by that manœuvre ; while it seemed quite impossible for him to escape over the waste-wear. He reached the embankment, and went panting and staggering up the steep side ; while Sellick mounted easily a rod or two nearer the village, and was at the top before him. This movement drove Jack on towards the waste-wear ; but Sellick, it was plain to see, would be there first also.

" You run well, sonny ! " laughed the constable ; " but you 're beat ! "

" Not yet ! " Jack cried. And, attempting to run back down the embankment, he found himself on a steep and dangerous place over the culvert.

" Give up, give up, sonny ! " said Sellick, working carefully down towards him from the top of the embankment. " Come ! then we 'll go to the grocery and have another drink of milk, 'fore we take that little ride together. I guess we can find some better milk this time ! Look out ! you 'll fall ! "

" I don't care if I do ! " exclaimed Jack, groping farther and farther down, as the constable ventured nearer. " Before I 'll let you take me — "

At that moment his foot appeared to slip ; he

seemed to make a feeble attempt to regain his hold, then, to avoid a dangerous fall, he threw himself clear of the masonry, and tumbled headlong into the water. It was the fall and the splash that drew forth the aforesaid exclamations from the spectators.

Sellick ran back to a safe place, and descended quickly to the edge of the pond, just in time to see Jack come up once, gasp, turn heavily in the water, and sink again. The jolly man was serious for once.

"Help!" he called. "I vum, the boy is drownding!"

There was a great rush to the spot; but, as is usually the case at such times, nobody seemed to know what to do. Some cried, "Bring a rope!" others, "Get a pole!" but neither pole nor rope was brought; nor would either have been of the least use, as the event proved.

Jack had fallen in deep water at a distance of several yards from any standing-place near the culvert. It was the intention to reach out something for him to lay hold of when he should rise in sight again. But, strange to say, good swimmer as he was, he did not reappear.

What had become of him we shall perhaps learn in the course of a chapter or two.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SEARCH, AND HOW IT ENDED.

CONSTABLE SELLICK was not a man devoid of feeling, for all his merry disposition. He stood gazing anxiously at the water, shading his eyes from the sun reflected in it; then, as Jack did not come up a second time, the worthy man was filled with consternation.

"Who are the good swimmers here?" he cried. "Go in after him, some one! You can dive, Len Edwards!"

"But I can't dive like Jack Hazard," answered Len. "I've seen him in the water with the Chatford boys. There's nothing he can't do in the water."

"His breath was most likely beat out of his body, striking the surface," observed Mr. Byron Dinks. "A man may strike the water in such a way, it will be like falling flat on a rock." And Byron picked his teeth with a stem of dry grass from the bank.

"I'll go in if Harry Pray will," said Len.

"Well! I'll go if you will," replied Harry. And in the midst of the general excitement and confusion, these two enterprising young men began to undress.

Before either was prepared for a plunge, however, a third young man, who had just arrived on the spot and learned that a boy was drowned, leaped out of his clothes as if by magic; while the word ran through

the crowd, "Percy Lanman! It's Percy Lanman! He can get him!"

"Take away that rail!" shouted a clear, ringing voice.

The rail, which somebody had brought, and which Sellick was poking ineffectually about in the deep place where he had seen Jack go down, was quickly withdrawn; and the owner of the voice, white and gleaming as a living statue, sprang from the bank; a splash and a flash, and he had disappeared in the sparkling water.

He was gone about fifteen seconds, which appeared almost as many minutes to some of those who watched with intense interest for his reappearance. At length he came up again, shook the water from his dripping head and winked it from his eyes, and looked about him while he took breath.

"If he can't find him we can't," observed Len, starting to put on his clothes again.

"I'm going in, anyhow," replied Harry, moving towards the water.

"If you do I will," said Len.

"No discoveries?" cried Sellick, anxiously.

Percy did not reply, but thrusting his head once more beneath the surface, swam slowly about with his eyes open, gazing into the sunlit depths.

Deacon Chatford groaned. "This is a sad business, Squire Peternot!"

"He should n't have tried to escape an officer of the law!" was Peternot's stern reply.

"There's no boy here!" Percy Lanman now announced, just as Len and Harry were going in.

"Tain't possible!" exclaimed Sellick.

"I'm sure of it!" said Percy. "Wait a minute, and I'll tell you where he went."

Down he plunged again; fifteen seconds passed — thirty seconds — a minute; still he did not reappear. Suddenly Harry Pray, as he was swimming about, heard a hollow splashing sound, and shouted, "He's in the culvert! Percy's in the culvert!"

"That's where the boy has gone!" exclaimed Squire Peternot.

"I thought of that!" said Sellick. "But there's no current, the mill ain't going, and he fell at least a dozen feet from the opening."

Percy now came swimming leisurely out of the culvert; making for the bank, he there proceeded to put on his clothes.

"No," said he, laughing, as Sellick questioned him, "the boy couldn't have floated into the culvert. But he went in just as I did,—swimming under water. And it's my opinion, if you want to find him, you'd better look for him on the other side of the canal."

"Fooled again, Sellick!" said the journeyman carpenter. And the cry went through the crowd, "Jack's got away! he has gone through the culvert under the canal!"

Sellick ran to the top of the bank and looked eagerly across,—a great crowd following him. Only

the level tow-path met his eye, and a horizon of far-off forest-tops beyond: not even the saw-mill was visible, to say nothing of the race into which the culvert conducted the pond water. The whole country fell away in that direction towards Lake Ontario, which lay behind the billowy line of forest-tops.

To make any discoveries on the other side of the high embankments, which carried the canal over what had once been a narrow valley opening out into the broad, low country, it would of course be necessary to cross to the tow-path. But there was no bridge nearer than the village, and Sellick did not like to get wet. So he called out to the two swimmers, now diligently looking for Jack in the pond after it had been shown that he was n't there, "Hello! Len and Harry! go through the culvert and see what you can see!"

"Will you, Harry?" said Len.

"No, I won't go through the culvert, for any constable!" replied Harry.

"Nor I neither, if you won't," said Len; the culvert being generally regarded with superstition by village bathers. "There's water-snakes in it!"

"If the mill should start, we could n't swim back against the current," Harry answered Sellick.

"Then hurry up here, and cross the canal; come, you've got your clothes off!" cried Sellick.

"What do you say, Harry?" asked Len.

"I d'n' know, I do' wanter!" replied Harry.

"Nor I neither!" said Len.

"Come, Sellick! don't be l'iterin' here!" exclaimed the impatient Peternot. "Either cross over, or go round by the bridge."

"Here comes an old wheat-boat; maybe the steersman 'll put us across," said Sellick. "Hello!" he shouted, "lay over here!" And he called to the driver: "Do you see any boy about the race-way, or running off anywhere, down on that side of the canal?"

"I see a man going into the saw-mill,—nobody else," answered the driver.

"Call him! tell him to come up to the tow-path."

"Call him yourself!" And the driver cracked his whip at the towing horses.

"I shall git aground, if I go over there," said the steersman.

"No, you won't! Good shore! plenty of water! you're light!"

"What's the row, anyhow?"

Before Sellick could answer, somebody in the crowd cried, "Prisoner got away—boy—went through the culvert under the canal—constable wants to go over and git him."

"Give ye a quarter," added Sellick.

Slowly the bow swung over towards the "heel-path"; then the steersman, bracing himself against the tiller, carried over the stern. The boat grated hard against the shore, and immediately, not only Sellick, but at least a dozen men and boys with him, jumped and scrambled aboard.

"Ruther more passengers 'n I bargained fer," remarked the steersman, as the boat floated off again. "Guess I shall haf to charge ye all about ten cents apiece."

"Charge 'em what you're a mind to, and set me across in a hurry," replied Sellick.

"What boy is it," asked the steersman, "and what mischief has he been up to?"

"His name is Hazard,—Jack Hazard."

"You don't say! I know Jack! I used to go with a scow his step-father was captain of when he was a driver; Cap'n Berrick's scow. But I thought Jack was doin' well, back in the country here somewhere."

"He was, till he got into another man's house by mistake," said Sellick. "He ain't a bad boy, Jack ain't; a good feller; smart too,—smartest boy I ever see! But slippery as an eel! He's slipped through my fingers twice to-day. But you ain't putting us ashore!"

"Passengers hain't paid their fare yet," replied the steersman, coolly keeping the boat in the middle of the canal. "Tell me about Jack."

"Lay up and I will! Here's my quarter."

"Ten cents,—ten cents all round; no partiality," said the steersman, declining the proffered coin. "About Jack—I've knowed him off and on for a couple o' year an' more, and I never believed he would steal."

"It was n't exactly stealing.—Hurry up with your

money! — Some disputed property. — Ten cents, boys! — He believed it was his, and took it. — Why don't you pay up, you fellows?"

Nobody but Sellick, however, seemed to think it desirable to pay money for being landed on the tow-path; and Sellick was unwilling to pay for the crowd.

"On the whole," remarked the steersman, "I guess I won't take your money. You may all ride up to the Basin for nothing. But you'll have to git off on the bridge, for we don't stop. — No, sir!" as Sellick offered to lay his hand on the tiller. "You're a perty good-lookin' chap, but ye can't come that nonsense here. I'm steersman of this craft, jest about now. You're welcome to yer ride, gentlemen, bein' friends of Jack's. Remember me to him, will ye, when ye fall in with him? — which I hope you won't in a hurry. Jest give him a hand-shake and a good word from his old chum Pete. Lay down that pike-pole, mister, or I'll lay you down!"

"I'm going ashore!" cried Sellick.

"You'll go ashore in a way you won't like!" said Pete; and there stood two rough, reckless-looking deck hands ready to back him.

Sellick dropped the pole with a laugh, which did not seem so spontaneous and hearty as some of the outbursts of merriment in which that mirthful gentleman had been known to indulge.

The spectators on the shore understood the movement, and, at sight of the jolly constable and his companions carried off against their will by the slow-

moving wheat-boat, sent after them a chorus of jeers and laughter, in which mingled the tone of one stern and angry voice, that of Squire Peternot, who struck the "heel-path" with his heavy horn-headed cane, exclaiming, "Hang the wretches ! hang the miserable villains !"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CULVERT AND THE CORNFIELD.

ALL these delays gave Jack time, and time was what he needed just now.

It was not until the moment when, pretending to fall, he threw himself from the masonry of the culvert, that the idea occurred to him of resorting to a little trick which he had often practised in the water with Lion, for the amusement of his companions, and of playing the part of a drowning boy. The dog that usually rescued him could be dispensed with on this occasion ; but the skill of the experienced swimmer might serve him.

He had seen the culvert whilst running towards the canal ; and even then the thought had flashed through his mind that, if he could once get into it, pursuit might be baffled, and his capture delayed, for at least a little while. He did not, however, suppose that it would be possible to pass through and escape, against the chances of being met and taken on the other side.

But now he thought if he could make it appear that he was drowned in the pond, then time might be gained. So, after his first plunge, he came up once, in order to catch breath and give one glance at the situation, then turned in the water and sank.

Fortunately the sun on the surface dazzled Sellick's eyes, or he might have seen a suspicious movement of the boy's hands, and the quiet gliding away of the boy's body through the clear depths, towards the arched opening in the masonry.

When next Jack came to the surface, he found himself in what seemed a long, narrow gallery, nearly filled with water; a low, vaulted roof just above him, and an opening at each end through which shone the light of the sky. Drops from the clammy and dripping stones fell with slow, echoing plashes in the cavernous gloom, reminding him that he was under the canal; that the great, winding, watery thoroughfare, which he had travelled many a summer, and through which the lazy boats moved, was now over his head.

Accustomed to diving as he was, a plunge at the end of an exhausting race was not a good thing for the lungs; and Jack declares that he was never so nearly dead for want of breath, as when he rose to the surface in the culvert. For a minute or more it seemed quite impossible for him to make any exertion, beyond what was necessary to keep his nose above water. But there he stayed, just moving his feet and hands, while he filled his aching lungs with drafts of air, which made him rise and sink, and sent gentle undulations and ripples along the dark culvert walls.

The cries for help came to his ears, and inspired him with fresh courage: he knew that his stratagem

had succeeded. He knew, too, that it would not be long before search would be made for him in the culvert, or at the other opening. "I must be moving!" he thought.

Swimming swiftly and silently under the low vault, he passed completely beneath the canal, and cautiously put his head out on the other side. Before him was the tranquil mill-race half filled with floating saw-logs, the saw-mill at the end of it, and a low, wild country of stumpy farms and wooded swamps beyond. Nobody in sight; but he could still hear excited voices on the other side of the canal embankments.

Gliding out of the culvert, he swam to the right bank of the race, which was there built up five or six feet from the ground, crawled over it, dropped down under it, and ran along beside it till he reached the mill. He heard the shrill shriek of filing saws as he passed, and knew that the sawyer was busy. Dodging between great piles of slabs and lumber, he kept on, and soon gained the shelter of a fringe of alders that bordered the onward-flowing mill-stream. That led him into a swampy piece of woods. And so it happened that, by the time Sellick and his companions scrambled from the deck of the wheat-boat upon the bridge at the Basin, and turned back to the culvert, the fugitive was nearly a mile away.

Traversing the swamp, Jack crossed several fields and a wood-lot, and at length came out upon a recent clearing, in which a number of half-burnt stumps

and log-heaps were smoking. Beyond that was a road ; and on the farther side of the road was a corn-field.

"That's the place to hide!" thought Jack ; and having stopped to drink at a little spring, he crossed the road, and was soon gliding between rows of tasselled stalks and long green rustling leaves.

The piece was wet, and a part of the crop was late, and Jack observed with interest a number of good roasting ears. Being a prudent youth, he had already begun to question where his next meal was to be obtained ; for although he had a little money, he had no hat, and feared to present himself anywhere bare-headed.

"I'll help myself, as the coons and squirrels do," said he, as he noticed the ravages of those destructive little beasts all about the field. "Hello ! here's something interesting !"

It was a scarecrow of stuffed clothes, from which a flock of noisy blackbirds flew up at his approach.

"That's a pretty good felt hat," said he ; "wonder how it would fit *me*. Excuse me, old fellow ; I need it more than you do ; I'll bring it back when I get through with it. In the mean while the blackbirds can't respect you any less than they do now, I know !"

He pulled off the hat, gave it a good beating on the scarecrow's outstretched wooden hand, and found that, by stuffing a few corn-husks under the lining, he could make it do very well.

"Thank you," said he. "Now I feel as if I had traded myself off for another boy. If you've no objections, I think I'll keep you company a little while. Poor company's better than none, as they say. Oblige me by holding my coat till it dries a little."

He hung his wet garment on the scarecrow, and walked leisurely about, selecting a few of the best roasting ears he could find. His breakfast had really amounted to nothing,—good Mrs. Pipkin's biscuit and butter having been sacrificed with the milk he bought of the grocer,—and he was growing faint.

The excitement of his escape had left him in good spirits. For a while he was buoyed up by a wild feeling of freedom; and his old love of adventure came back upon him. The wrongs he had suffered made him reckless and defiant of the whole world.

"I've tried to be honest; but what's the use?" said he. "I thought I'd got a chance for myself, and this is what it comes to! Even the deacon has turned against me! Now let 'em look out! I'll have my pay, somehow!"

If Jack had kept near the canal, and in this mood had seen his old friend Pete comfortably riding the tiller of the wheat-boat, his whole future might have been changed by so slight a circumstance. But his good genius had not yet given him over to his own vindictive thoughts and rash resolves.

With weariness and hunger came memory and reflection. The burning sense of injury with which he thought of Peternot and Phineas Chatford, and all

who had been instrumental in his disgrace, gave way to different emotions as he remembered good Mrs. Chatford, and lovely Annie Felton, and affectionate little Kate.

"O, shall I never see them again?" he murmured; and a big sob rose in his throat. And the home where he had been so happy for a few short months! And Lion! "I won't go without Lion, anyway!" he exclaimed. "I'll see the Huswick boys about the money, and get that if I can, and Lion anyhow!"

It was a beautiful day, mild and tranquil and hazy, with just that tinge of melancholy in it which marks the gradual change of summer into autumn. To Jack, lurking there in the silent cornfield, it seemed like Sunday. He sat down in the warm sunlight by the scarecrow, and waited for his clothes to dry.

The shrill song of the locust rose now and then on the still air, increasing for a few seconds in vehemence, then sank and ceased; and occasionally the gossip of the multitudinous blackbirds came quite near to him, as the chattering flocks settled on the corn; but he heard scarcely any other sound, until suddenly he became aware of footsteps and a rustling of leaves not far off. He sat still, and listened. Then all was quiet again for a minute or two. Then came the loud report of a fowling-piece, accompanied by a curious rattling sound close above his head. A scattering volley of small shot had cut the corn-tops all about the spot where he sat.

His first thought was that he had been shot at. But just then a cloud of blackbirds rose from the corn, and the feet he had heard approaching rushed towards them. He kept perfectly still, and saw a boy about his own size run past him, between two rows of corn, not a rod off. The young hunter might easily have discovered Jack sitting there beside the scarecrow, if he had not been so intent on picking up his blackbirds.

CHAPTER XXX.

JACK BREAKFASTS AND RECEIVES A VISITOR.

SOON Jack heard the gun in another part of the field; then a quarter of a mile off; then faintly in the far distance. Then the blackbirds came back again.

"Now," said Jack, "I'll see what I can do for breakfast."

He put on his coat, filled his pockets with roasting ears, and returned towards the stump-lot where he had seen the smoking log-heaps. He had not gone far when he saw something black hop along the ground before him. It was a wounded blackbird. He gave chase, picked up a dead bird by the way, caught and killed the first, and dressed both with his jack-knife. They were plump and fat.

"Some folks think blackbirds ain't good to eat," said he, "but I am going to try 'em."

Cautiously emerging from the cornfield, he crossed the road, and got over into the clearing. There he found the spring at which he had drank before, and, having drank again, he washed his hands and face and prepared his birds for roasting. He now sought out one of the half-burnt log-heaps, and, crouching beside it, opened a bed of glowing coals with a green branch which he used as a poker. A part of the

branch he whittled into a spit for his birds, and then proceeded to cook his breakfast.

He burnt the corn, and likewise his fingers a little, and more than once a bird dropped from the spit into the fire; but he didn't mind these slight mishaps. His appetite was good, and, everything being ready at last, he made a delicious meal without salt. How sweet the roasted corn was! And he laughed at the foolish prejudice of some ignorant people against the flesh of blackbirds, as he sucked the tender bones and tossed them into the fire.

All this time he kept a wary watch for intruders; and now he was not pleased to see over his shoulder a man crossing the stump-lot. He moved at a sauntering pace, and stooped now and then to examine objects on the ground; and Jack noticed that once or twice he appeared to put something into a little bag he carried in his hand.

"Maybe he won't see me," thought Jack. "Yes, he will, though! He's coming straight towards me!"

He thought it best, however, to keep quiet and go on with his breakfast. He had already thrown the well-gnawed corn-cobs into the fire, and was picking the last ribs of his second blackbird, when the stranger drew near.

"You seem to be having a jolly time here, all by yourself."

Jack looked up, and saw beside him a rather short, square-built young man, with a face strongly marked by the small-pox,—a face which, however, in spite



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of its blemishes, was rendered interesting and attractive by a certain lively and good-humored expression. The little bag in his hand turned out to be a handkerchief tied up by the corners, from between which peeped the green tufts and delicate plumes of some fresh mosses and ferns.

"Not so very jolly," replied Jack, perceiving at once that he had nothing to fear from a person who

looked down upon him out of such pleasant and kindly eyes.

"You'd better stir your fire and burn up those cobs before old Mr. Canning comes this way," said the stranger. "He's a man who would have prosecuted the Master and his disciples for plucking corn in his field on the Sabbath day."

"He can prosecute me, if he likes," replied Jack, with a reckless laugh. "I've one crabbed old man after me already."

"I thought so. Your clothes have n't got quite dry yet, I see. Do you know, I have you to thank for a fine bath this morning?"

Jack stared. "How so?"

"I went into the pond after you." And Percy Lanman—for it was he—proceeded to relate what had occurred at the culvert after Jack's escape.

Jack was greatly entertained, especially by the story of Sellick and his companions carried up to the Basin by his old friend Pete, on the wheat-boat. Percy's good-humor and sympathy had by this time quite won his confidence, and the fugitive told him in return the whole story of his misfortunes.

"I think you have been treated outrageously!" said the young man. "But yours is not so extraordinary a case of injustice as you suppose. I advise you to read history a little: you will find it for the most part only a record of wrong and oppression. Human nature is about the same to-day it always has been. Most people—I am sorry to say it—are

capable of seeing only their own selfish interest in anything that concerns them. As you go through life you must expect to see friends and neighbors start out into enemies and oppressors, when their personal interest is touched. The worst of it will be, that people of whom you expect better things — who are supposed to know something of the Golden Rule, and to be actuated by feelings of justice and benevolence — will for the sake of a few dollars grasp and scramble, and show no more regard for reason and right than so many hungry wolves."

This picture of the worst side of human society was well calculated to show Jack that his was not the only or the worst case of wrong in the world. "But what is a fellow to do ?" he asked.

Percy sat down on the ground, and, opening his handkerchief, talked on, while he assorted his mosses and ferns.

" You must make up your mind, in the first place, that you have got to bear a good deal of this sort of thing in going through life. Beware of briars and thistles, but remember that they exist, and be patient when you get pricked. In reading stories of persecution and martyrdom, I always feel that I had rather be the just man who suffered for the right, than the tyrants and bigots who tried to destroy him. Be true to yourself, and nobody can do you any real, permanent harm. Let 'em rage ! what do you and I care ? There is something in our minds superior to all their spites. You have done what almost any boy would

do, that was smart enough ; and I can't help laughing to think how you locked up the court, and afterwards went through the culvert whilst we were trying to fish you out of the pond."

Jack laughed too, as he mechanically looked over Percy's plants.

" But you might have done better,—you might do better now," said the young man. And his scarred and pitted features looked somehow radiant and beautiful to Jack.

" What could I do ? "

" Why, let 'em take you to jail, if they want to. What hurt will it do you ? Stand up and say, 'I thought I was right ; I meant to do right ; and now if you want to send me to jail, go ahead ! I can stand it ! I 'm willing ! ' Throw yourself boldly on your honesty, rest on that rock, and let 'em do their worst ! "

Jack, feeling how little honesty there had been in his heart a little while before, hung his head over a sprig of fern he was twirling between thumb and finger.

" Mind, I don't advise you to do just that, for I 'm not sure you 're up to it. But if you could do it, 't would be grand in you ! People talk of good and bad fortunes ; but fortunes are good or bad according to the use we make of 'em. This disgrace you are suffering now you may turn into one of the blessings of your life ; or it may make a thief or a vagabond of you. Understand ? "

Percy's eyes twinkled like a clear, running brook, as they looked into Jack's, which fell before them,—the lad remembering how really he had been a thief and vagabond in his heart, an hour ago. Yes, he understood.

"Think it over," said Percy. "Meanwhile you will want a little money."

"No, I sha' n't!" cried Jack.

"But you will, though. Here's a trifle, which you can repay when it is perfectly convenient," added Percy, seeing that the proud boy would not accept a gift.

"Well, if you *lend* it to me," said Jack, receiving the jingling coin in his palm. "I'll pay you some time. If I can only get that money of Hank Huswick! I'll go for it this very afternoon!"

"Well, good by," said Percy, tying up his plants. "Keep your head and heart right, and you 'll do well, whatever happens. Come to me if you want help. You know where I live."

And he sauntered off across the field, looking curiously at every bird and plant and stone.

"How happy he is!" thought Jack, following him with yearning eyes. "And I was just so happy once! Shall I ever, shall I ever be again?"

He revisited the spring, and afterwards made a dessert of berries in a wild field hedged by raspberry and blackberry bushes; then set out to find the Huswick boys.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TEA WITH AUNT PATSY.

ALONE in her lonely little house, in the closing twilight, Aunt Patsy had put up the leaf of her rickety pine table, and, having placed upon it a pewter plate and a cracked teacup, was busy preparing her humble supper,—bending over the hearth, toasting a crust of bread on a fork, beside a simmering teapot,—when the door was softly pushed open and somebody looked in.

“Who’s there?” shrieked the old woman, dropping her toast and starting up in affright.

“Nobody but me; don’t be scared, Aunt Patsy.” And the visitor glided into the room and softly closed the door again.

“You! Jack Hazard!” she exclaimed, recovering her self-possession. “Bless ye, lad, I’m always glad to see ye. But vicious boys have played so many mean tricks on me, I’m awful skittish! It’s gittin’ so dark I did n’t know ye at fust. Or is it that odd-lookin’ hat you’ve got on?”

Jack laughed, and said he thought it must be the hat that disguised him. “It’s a borrowed one; I’m great on borrowing hats! Did I ever tell you how I made free with Syd Chatford’s once? A very quiet and accommodating gentleman was kind enough to let

me take this right off from his head ; he 's standing out in the open field bareheaded now, waiting for me to return it."

" What are ye talkin' ? Set down, won't ye, and keep a poor body company for a little while ? You 're jest in time to take a cup o' tea with me, and eat a piece of Mis' Chatford's pie ye brought me. I wish I had a candle ; but I 'm too poor to indulge in luxuries. I can start up a flash of fire, though."

" Don't start it up for me," replied Jack. " I prefer to sit in the dark."

" But we must have a trifle of a blaze, to see to eat by ; besides, I want a glimpse o' your face. Friends' faces ain't so common a sight with me that I can afford to miss seein' 'em when they do look in. How 's Mis' Chatford, and dear Miss Felton ? "

" They seemed to be in their usual state of health when I last saw them. I have left Mr. Chatford's ; did you know it ? "

" Left — Deacon Chatford's ! Why, lad, you astonish me !" And Aunt Patsy, who was putting some chips on the fire, turned and stared at her guest. " I thought you was kind of adopted by them."

At this the cheery tone of voice in which Jack had spoken began to fail him. " I — I thought — I hoped so — too," he murmured, standing beside the mantel-piece. " But I have left. I can never go back there again. I 'm in a bad scrape, and even if

I get out of it I can't go back ; for there's a lie between Phin and me, and of course they believe Phin and blame me," he went on with swelling passion in his tones. "I've just come in to say good by to you."

"Good by, Jack ? You can't mean it ! Where ye goin' ?" And the amazed old woman and the agitated boy stood facing each other in the flickering firelight.

"I don't know ! I just want to see *her* first,— I mean Miss Felton,— and get my dog ; then I'm off ; no matter where. I must n't be seen here. You could n't hide me, could you, if anybody should come in ? There's a constable after me."

"A constable ! Why, what *is* the trouble ? I'll bar the door, the fust thing !" The door was barred, and then Aunt Patsy carefully arranged her dingy window-curtains so that no spying eye could look in. "Now, here is the wood-shed ; you know that well enough, often as you have been in it to split my wood for me. The door is hooked on the inside. You might slip in here, if anybody comes ; and then, if I give ye a signal, spring out of that door or out of the back winder, either. But I don't see why anybody should be s'archin' for ye in my house !"

"Paternot knows I come here sometimes," said Jack. "But never mind. I've slipped through the officer's hands twice to-day. I'll risk him !"

"Is it Paternot !" exclaimed the old woman,

angrily. "Tell me about it! Meanwhile ye must drink a cup o' tea with me."

In vain Jack protested that he did not drink tea, that he was n't hungry, and begged her not to trouble herself for him. She removed the pewter plate and cracked cup, and, reaching the top shelf of her closet, brought down the last remnants of an old-fashioned china tea-set, a couple of plates and cups and saucers, once fair and delicate but now much defaced by wear, the edges being nicked and the original colored figures and gilding mostly gone.

While more bread was toasting, Jack began his story.

"A trunk of money!" exclaimed Aunt Patsy, interrupting him. "In Peternot's woods! I wonder! But go on, then I'll tell *you* something!"

When he came to his adventure with the squire, she broke forth again, "Jest like the mean old miserly curnudgeon! He's tried for fifteen year to git my little morsel of a place away from me; but he hain't done it yit, and he never will, long as I'm above the sod. But go on, go on, Jack; then I'll tell *you* a story!"

So Jack related all that had happened, down to his encounter with Percy Lanman; by which time the toast and tea were on the table, and the old lady, though excited by the narrative, bade him sit up and share her supper. "It's a poor show, I know," said she, "but it's the best I have; and I should n't have all this if 't wa'n't for you and Mis' Chatford."

"This toast is all I want," said Jack. "I went to a house about two hours ago and got a bowl of bread and milk for ten cents. The woman didn't want to take anything, but I thought I'd let her know I was n't a beggar, though I felt like one; for I'd just had a wild-goose-chase after the Huswick boys and my bag of money."

"The Huswick boys! they're as bad as Peternot himself, though in a different way," said Aunt Patsy, sipping her tea in the dancing light of the fire, while Jack, sitting at the table to please her, nibbled his toast.

"I've done three silly things, one every time I put any trust in those rascals!" said Jack. "First, when I left 'em to guard the money while I ran for Mr. Chatford; next, when I went with 'em to get it back from the old squire; and again, when I went home last night, instead of sticking tight to Hank and Tug till we found Cub and the money."

"That seems the weakest thing you have done," said the old woman. "Though if they meant to rob you, your follerin' on 'em up would have done no good."

"I thought of that; and I imagined it would have a good effect if I took Hank's word, and made him believe I thought there was a little honor in him. He may mean well by me still; but I'm pretty sure he is dodging me on purpose. I found Dock and Hod and Tug this afternoon; and they said Hank and Cub had cleared out for a day or two for fear

they would be arrested for helping me break into Peternot's house. Tug vowed he did n't know where they were or what they had done with the money."

"They 're playin' you false," said Aunt Patsy. "But don't mind. Now I 'll tell you my story, and you 'll see you hain't lost so much, and they hain't gained so much, as you and they think."

"What do you mean ?" cried Jack.

The old woman took a sip of tea and went on. "I know about that money ; at least, I know somethin' about it. You 've heard complaints agin my fust husband,— how bad characters used to come to our house, for one thing. I don't deny but what there was somethin' in that, though he was a good man to me ; whatever else he was, he was good to me !" And the old woman wiped away a tear. "There was one Sam Williams,— I always telled my husband he 'd better have nothin' to do with him, for I was sure he 'd come to some bad end ; and sure enough he did ; he escaped from a constable and was shot ; died of his wound in jail. This was a year or two 'fore my fust husband died ; and 't was when the officers was arter him that he come to our house one night with a little trunk of money."

"Half-dollars ?" said Jack, eagerly interrupting her.

"I believe so, though I don't remember for sartin about that. He wanted my husband to keep it for him ; but I said, 'Don't ye have nothin' to do with it, if you want to keep out o' trouble.' Well, he

stayed with us from jest arter dark one evenin' till jest afore day next mornin'; and that was the last we ever see of him. That must 'a' been the trunk, and he hid it in the woods. If it was," added Aunt Patsy, looking keenly at Jack across the corner of the table, "then either Mr. Chatford or the goldsmith has made a grand mistake."

Again Jack anxiously demanded what she meant; but just as she was about to explain herself, there came a light rap at the door. He sprang to his feet in an instant.

"Hish!" she whispered, shaking her finger at him.

She hurriedly replaced the extra plate and cup and saucer in the closet, while Jack, stepping on tiptoes, took refuge in the wood-shed. The rap was repeated just as she reached the door.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A STARLIGHT WALK WITH ANNIE FELTON.

WITHOUT removing the bar, Aunt Patsy called out, “Who’s there? What do you want?”

“I want to see you, Aunt Patsy,” answered a sweet feminine voice.

“Is it you, Miss Felton? Bless me!” And the old woman hastily unbarred the door. “To think of my keepin’ you standin’ outside! Come in, come in, you darlin’!”

In walked Annie, fresh and smiling, but casting nevertheless an anxious and wistful glance about the room.

“I have just run over from my aunt’s,” she said; “really, I can’t sit down. I thought you might have some news of our friend Jack.”

“Jack?” said the old lady, in a voice loud enough to be heard in the wood-shed. “What about Jack?”

“Has no one told you? I did n’t know but he himself — O Jack!” exclaimed Annie, joyfully, taking a quick step towards the door through which the youngster at that moment advanced into the room, “I am so glad to see you! I heard how you had got away, and I was afraid we might never see you again!”

“I could n’t go without seeing you once more!” said Jack, trembling with emotion at this unexpected

meeting. "Though I was n't sure you would care to see me."

"O Jack! why not? Whatever you may have done, I shall always feel an interest in you."

"An interest in me!" said Jack, chokingly. "Bad as I am, that's kind!" He spoke bitterly, and drew back from her with a look of disappointment.

"My dear Jack! you are not angry with me?"

"No! you might say what you like, I could never be angry with you. But I did n't think you would believe anything so very bad of me, just from what other people say. I hoped at least you would wait and hear my story first." And Jack, still turning from her, wiped his quivering eyes with his sleeve.

"Have I said I believed anything very bad of you?" asked Annie, softly.

"No, but *whatever I might have done*, you said. That is, you don't quite give me up, in spite of my awful conduct!"

"Don't you see, Miss Felton," cried Aunt Patsy, "he's been so put upon and misused, he can't be satisfied without his friends take his part in down-right 'arrest? That's nat'ral. Half-way words won't suit him."

"I know!" added Jack, with a passionate outburst; "Phin's her cousin; he's a saint, and I am a liar and a villain, of course, if he says so!"

"You know very well I don't think Phin a saint," replied Annie, with gentle dignity, "any more than I think you a villain. You are both boys, with the

faults of boys. From all I hear, you have not done perfectly right in every respect ; and I don't think you will claim that you have. If you expected me just to pat you on the back, and say, 'Poor Jack ! good Jack ! how they have abused you !' why, then, you have n't known what a real friend I am to you. I came here this evening, hoping to find you, and to do something for you. But if this is the way you meet me, I suppose I might as well have stayed at home." And now *she* turned away.

"Don't go !" Jack entreated. "O Miss Felton ! forgive me if I am unreasonable ! But it seems so hard to know that *you* think my enemies are in the right ! Do you believe I would break into a house and steal ; that I would make up a lie, to shift the blame to Phin or his father or any one else ? I can bear to have others think so meanly of me, but not you !" And the boy's passion broke forth in uncontrollable sobs.

She took his hand with one of hers, and laid the other kindly and soothingly upon his shoulder.

"There, there, Jack !" she said, her own voice full of emotion ; "I don't believe you would deliberately steal or make up such a lie. I know you would n't !"

"And as for the money," sobbed Jack, "I did just what Peternot's own nephew, who is studying law, said he should advise any one to do who found treasure on another man's land ; he said, 'Pocket it and say nothing about it ; keep possession, any way ; fight for it.' That's what I tried to do. Then after



A TRUE FRIEND.

I had been robbed of it, I went to take it again, and that's the cause of all my trouble."

"I regard Squire Peternot's course very much as you do," said Annie, still soothing the lad, with one hand pressing his own and the other on his shoulder, "though I'm not so angry at him. He has acted according to his nature; not according to the Golden Rule, very sure. But how few people act according

to the Golden Rule, Jack ! If we were to quarrel with all who fail in that respect, I am afraid we should find ourselves in difficulty with nearly the whole world. No, Jack ; it 's useless to fly into a passion with everybody we see acting selfishly and meanly. It is much better to look carefully after our own conduct, and see what we may be doing that is wrong. Now I want you to walk home with me, and tell me your story by the way ; then we will see what had better be done. Aunt Patsy will leave her door unbarred, so that you can come back and see her again."

They went out together, and talked long in low tones as they walked under the starlit sky across the fields.

"Now, Jack," said Annie, when they had reached Mr. Chatford's orchard, and stopped beside the little brook that kept up its low liquid babble in the dark shadows that half concealed it, "I have heard your own story, and I can't say that I blame you very much for anything you have done. You have acted naturally, but not always wisely. No doubt so much money appeared a great fortune to you, and of course something very desirable. But I am by no means sure it would have been a good thing for you to have. I 'm afraid your head would have been turned by it. You were doing well enough before. You were sure of a good living, a good home, and a chance for yourself, as I have heard you say with honest pride so many times."

"This is what my chance has finally come to!" said Jack, — "no home, no future, but a constable at my heels!"

"I can think of something that might be worse for you than all that,—*getting rich too fast*. That's what ruins many. You were happy in slowly working your way up the ladder, happier than you could ever be again if you should suddenly find yourself at the top. The money might not have harmed you, but I am sure you could have done very well without it. Don't regret it if it is lost. And, of all things, don't associate yourself with bad companions or adopt unjustifiable means to gain even justifiable ends. Better submit to a little wrong. If your enemies succeed in overreaching you, so much the worse for them. Would n't you rather be robbed than feel that you have robbed another? I know you would, Jack!"

"You talk just like Percy Lanman!" said the boy, his heart beginning to feel warmed and comforted.

"The young man who dove for you in the pond? I heard Mr. Chatford tell about him."

"I saw him in the fields afterwards, and he lent me some money. He talked just as you do!" Jack declared.

"Now, Jack," said Annie, leaning tenderly on his shoulder and looking into his face by the pale starlight, while her touch and the tones of her voice set a little stream of joy dancing and singing in his heart, like the shadowy brook at their feet, "I'm going to be frank with you; hear what I say. Don't run

away. Don't hide. Don't try to shirk the consequences of what you have done, but go home with me now."

"To Mr. Chatford's?" said Jack with a start.

"Yes, just as if nothing had happened. Aunt's folks will receive you kindly, I know, from what they have said."

"Never!" said Jack. "I never can enter that house again as long as there's a lie between me and Phin. It may be natural for his father to believe him instead of me; but it's something I never can get over. No!" he added, as she would have urged him; "I can go anywhere else, and suffer anything, before I can go back there. Besides, how long before Sellick would be after me again, and carry me off to jail?"

"Worse things than that might happen to you," Annie replied.

"What?" said Jack.

"To go back to your former life and associates, to fall again under bad influences, and lose all the good you have gained since you have been with Uncle Chatford's folks; that would be worse. I don't want you to go to jail, but I'd rather see you go there innocent, than run away as if you were guilty. How proud I should be of you, if you could stand up and say, 'I may have done wrong, but I did n't mean to; now here I am, put me in jail if you want to!' You would be proud of yourself too! Your face would shine as it never did before."

"O Miss Felton!" said Jack, "that's just the way Percy Lanman talked!"

"Get rid of all rash thoughts of revenge and wild living, and put your trust in Providence, and in your own integrity," she went on. "Be yourself, your better self, always, and you'll come off victorious over everything. That's my advice, dear Jack; and if Percy Lanman gave you the same, I honor him for it. Now will you come in with me?"

"I'll go as far as the door with you," said Jack, "but I can't go in; I can't!"

As they emerged from the orchard and approached the house, they could see through a lighted window the family sitting round the evening lamp; Mrs. Chatford sewing, the deacon reading, Mr. Pipkin holding a skein of thread for Mrs. Pipkin to wind, and Phin and Moses playing "fox-and-geese," while little Kate stood by looking over the board,—a picture of quiet domestic enjoyment that reminded poor Jack of what he had lost, and wrung his heart with grief.

"Everything is just as it was before; nobody thinks of me, nobody cares for me!" he exclaimed. "Good night!" And, moved by a wild and passionate sorrow, he broke from her gentle, restraining touch, and disappeared in the orchard.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A STRANGE CALL AT A STRANGE HOUR OF THE NIGHT.

WANDERING to and fro among the dark and silent trees, Jack mastered his grief at length ; then, remembering that he had still one faithful friend, he went to find Lion.

No affectionate whine welcomed his approach. He spoke ; he stooped and looked into the gloomy and deserted kennel : no dog was there. Phin, foreseeing the possibility of Jack's return on some such errand, had that night chained Lion in the barn, and the door was locked.

Passing again near the house, Jack cast a vindictive look through the window at Phin,—a look full of wrath and misery, which was, however, softened a little when he saw Annie, standing, bonnet in hand, and O how beautiful ! talking to the family. Mr. Chatford had put aside his paper, and the women their work, and the boys their play, to listen to her. Jack knew she was talking of him ; and it seemed that he could almost hear the gracious words that fell from those sweet, sad lips.

He watched until he saw all eyes turned upon Phineas, and Phineas began to cry. She went on into another room, and Mr. Chatford commenced talking to Phin. Then Phin looked up through his

tears and made some violent protestation. The deacon turned with a dissatisfied countenance to his newspaper, while Phin slunk away and sat moping in a corner.

"I'd rather be in my place than in his, anyway!" murmured Jack. "I'd rather have anything done to me than *be* mean and cowardly!"

The memory of all Annie Felton had said to him came back upon his heart, which softened more and more under the influence of that pure and gentle soul, as he walked back through the fields to Aunt Patsy's house.

"I was dreadful 'fraid you would n't come back," said the old woman, welcoming him. "See! I've made up a sort of bed for you on the floor. You can sleep here every night as long as you have to dodge the constable."

Jack, deeply affected by her kindness, regarded her with struggling emotions for some moments before he ventured to speak. Here was one of the outcasts of society, of whom it was impossible for many people to believe any good thing, who appeared to the world a hardened, embittered, hateful old hag, and nothing more; and yet how kind, how motherly even, she was to him in his trouble! Thus there are people all about us whom the world judges from having seen only one side of them, and that their worst side, while deep springs of human feeling lie hidden in their lives.

Jack murmured his thanks, and said, "I wanted

to ask you more about that money. You said either Mr. Chatford or the goldsmith had made a mistake about it."

"I'm sure on 't," replied Aunt Patsy. "So don't worry over your loss. There's no doubt but what that was Sam Williams's trunk ; and me and my husband knowed as well as we wanted to that Sam was a practised counterfeiter. Of course, the coin was bogus."

Jack took a quick step across the room, and, returning, looked steadily at the fire.

"If I had only come and told you about it in the first place !" he said. Then after a moment's thought, "Maybe I'll come back and sleep on the bed you have made for me ; I'll be here again in half an hour, if I conclude to. Don't wait for me longer than that. Good night, if I don't come back."

"Any time to-night, I'll let you in !" were her last words as he left her door and disappeared in the darkness.

He walked fast down the road, passed Peternot's house, turned the opposite corner, and kept on until he came to a farm-house standing on a gentle rise of ground near the street. He walked boldly up to the door and knocked. A large-eyed, round-faced, cheerful-looking woman appeared.

"Is the man of the house at home ?" Jack inquired.

"He's somewhere about the barn, with a lantern," replied the woman, regarding him with some curiosity.

"I'll find him then," said Jack.

As he approached the barn, he saw a man with a lantern come out, leading a horse. Near the door, which he left open, he set down the lantern in the yard, and disappeared with the horse around a corner of the barn.

"He's just going to the pasture bars," thought Jack. "He'll be back in about two minutes." His resolution began to waver. "I wish I had waited till morning! Maybe 'tis n't too late now. I'll just slip into the barn, anyway."

He slipped into the barn accordingly, and seeing, by the light of the lantern that shone in, a pile of clean straw in one corner, the idea occurred to him that it would make a very good bed. He could n't help laughing as he lay down and covered himself with it, thinking, "This is a joke I guess the joker himself would relish!"

The man presently returned, took up the lantern, looked into the barn as if to see that everything was secure, closed a door leading to an adjacent stable, and then retired, shutting the barn door after him and fastening it with a padlock.

"There's been a boy here for you; have you seen him?" said the cheerful-faced woman when he reached the house.

"I've seen no boy, and I don't want to see another for a fortnight," replied the man, humorously; "I've had enough of boys! What sort of a boy?"

"He had his hat over his eyes, but he looked to me just like that Hazard boy."

"Jack ? That's too rich ! Ha, ha, ha ! The idee of Jack's giving his friend Sellick a call ! Ha, ha, ha !" laughed the merry constable.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HOW JACK WON A BET, AND RETURNED A FAVOR.

THE next morning Sellick sat milking a cow in the yard, when a clear, pleasant voice close beside him said, "Good morning, Mr. Constable!"

He had heard footsteps and the rattling of a milk-pail behind him, but had not looked around, thinking it was Billy the farm-boy coming to help him. Now he looked, however, and there stood his escaped prisoner of yesterday, smiling, with a milk-pail in one hand and a stool in the other.

"Ha! good morning, sonny!" cried Sellick, excitedly. His first impulse was to spring and seize the fugitive; his next, to sit still.

"You helped me milk yesterday morning, now I've come to help you," said Jack. "I like to pay my debts."

"That's right! that's fair!" said the astonished constable.

"Which is the kicking cow? I don't want to tackle her!" quietly remarked Jack, surveying the little herd.

"Try that heifer with the white forefeet," replied Sellick. "You're an honest boy, as I said yesterday! I've changed works many a time with a neighbor, but I never had one return my little favors quite so

prompt ! You kind o' took my breath away ! Where have you been since we parted in that rather abrupt fashion yesterday ? ”

“ O, travelling about the country a little ! ” said Jack, seating himself beside the heifer. “ I thought I would make the most of my opportunities ; I may not have another chance soon.”

“ What trick is the fellow up to now ? ” thought the constable. “ He must have settled the affair with Peternot ! ” So he said aloud, “ Have you seen the squire ? ”

“ Not since I left him with you in the court-room. The squire and I are not the best friends in the world, I’m sorry to say. ‘ Nice old man, the squire ! ’ But I’ve called on him once too often.”

“ Where was you last night ? ”

“ *You* kept me last night.”

“ I kept you, sonny ? ” said Sellick, more and more puzzled.

“ Yes ; I thought it was no more than fair that you should give me a night’s lodging. I won’t ask you to board me ; I pay for my own milk, you know.”

“ Yes, I know ! ” Sellick grimaced at the recollection. “ But where *did* you sleep last night ? Not under my roof ! ”

“ Yes, I did, under your roof ! ” laughed Jack.

“ Look here, sonny ! ” cried the incredulous Sellick, “ I’ll bet ye a trifle on that ! I believe you’re an honest boy, as I’ve said ; but you could n’t have slept under my roof without my knowing it, unless Billy

smuggled you in, and he would n't have dared to do it!—Here, Billy!" An old-looking, broad-shouldered, hollow-cheeked youth came into the yard. "Did you take this fellow into my house last night?"

"I never saw him on the place before," replied Billy, "though I rather guess he 's the one Mis' Sellick says come to the door last evening and asked for you."

"I came to your door, and afterwards slept under your roof," Jack insisted. "Since you offer to bet, I 'll bet ye,—well, I 'm no gambler, but I 'll say my hat against a bowl of bread and milk."

"No more milk! no more milk!" said Sellick, good-humoredly. "That cupful of yesterday soured on my stomach, if it didn't on yours. Call it a breakfast; I 'm willing."

"All the better," said Jack. "Now just step into your barn, and in the left-hand farther corner you 'll find a heap of straw, which you 'll agree has been slept on. There 's a pitchfork standing behind it; and there 's a bound bundle, which I used as a pillow. I walked in last evening and made myself at home, while you were leading your horse to the pasture."

"I can believe all that," said Sellick readily. "But my barn ain't my house."

"I said nothing about your house; I bet that I slept under your *roof*!"

"Sonny, I give it up! Keep on in the way you have begun, and you 'll make a joker, by the time you 're a hundred year old. But what in sixty *have*

you come here for this morning ? If that's a joke too, I can't see it."

"I thought you might like to finish that little ride we began yesterday. Not that I'm at all anxious about it," Jack explained, "but your heart seemed set on it; and, thinking it over, I concluded 't was too bad to disappoint you."

"And you mean—" Sellick, sitting by his cow, paused to grin at the young milker in puzzled astonishment.

"Yes, I do!" said Jack laughing; "I don't mean to spill any more milk, nor lock up any more court-rooms, nor go through any more culverts, very soon." Then, as Sellick still looked incredulous, he added, more seriously, "I've thought it all over, and made up my mind to just this, if I've done anything to be taken to jail for, why, then, take me to jail, if you want to."

"You're deep!" said Sellick, still suspicious of some cunning design hidden beneath Jack's candid avowal; "or else you're a bigger fool than I took ye for."

"Have it which way you like," Jack replied. And having fairly committed himself to this open and manly course, he felt his bosom swell with honest pride and satisfaction. "Now, whatever happens," thought he, "I've done what is right; I'll be true, I'll be my better self, I won't lie or skulk, for anybody or anything!" Or if he did not think this, he felt it, and it made him brave and strong.

"You're a smart boy to milk," said Sellick, looking at the contents of Jack's pail when it was brought to him. "If you git out of this scrape, I should n't wonder if I would hire you. What do you say?"

It did not seem to Jack that he could bear to live so near Deacon Chatford's house, and feel that he might never enter it again as he used to do. Yet such an offer was encouraging; and the confidence in him which it implied, on the part of the constable, touched his heart.

"There will be time enough to talk about that after I get out of the scrape," he said. "I can't make any bargain till then."

"That's right; that's fair and honest. You'll find it a fust-rate place," Sellick went on; "good living, plenty to do, and a jolly man to work for. Do chores this winter to pay for your board, and go to school if you like; and next summer I'll pay you wages. Think on't, you'd better. Now for breakfast. You've earnt yours, say nothing about the bet. You can milk a cow twice as quick as Billy. Good boy, but slow, is Billy; drea'ful modrit; stiddy as a yoke of oxen. Fust summer he worked for me — Talking about you, Billy," said Sellick, as the old-looking youth overtook them on their way to the house.

Billy, looking as if he was used to being made fun of, said, "Sho!" and grinned, and hung his head.

"Telling how stiddy you be. Fust season he worked for me, I had a good deal of chopping to do over in the South Swamp. So fur off, men used to

carry their dinners. Billy went over every day 'cept Sundays, all spring, till along into May, when I noticed something mighty curi's about his face. From a straight line down his forehead and nose, all one side was tanned like an Injin's, while t' other was white as a lady's."

"Sho ! 't wa' n't so !" said Billy.

"Fact. And this is how it happened. He went over in the morning with the left side of his face turned towards the sun as 't was rising, and come home at night with the same side turned towards the sun as 't was setting; worked in the shade of the woods all day, and never turned his head going and coming, 'cause he's sich a stiddy boy." And Sellick set the example of laughing merrily at his own wit.

"Folks that work for you don't git a chance to come home with the sunlight on their faces," grumbled Billy. "You keep us to work till dark, and sometimes by moonlight. You'll find it so, if you come to work for him," he added, turning to Jack. "'T ain't like working for Deacon Chatford."

As Sellick had the reputation of driving his hired men early and late, this hit told; and he made haste to change the conversation.

"Billy's bilious. Billy'll feel better arter breakfast. Billy's smart at one thing, if nothing else,—knife-and-fork practice. If he worked as well as he eats, there'd be no need of his sometimes staying in the field till dark. But come in, come in; breakfast, boys, breakfast." And he led the way into the house.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AT MR. CHATFORD'S GATE.

"How strange it seems," said Mrs. Pipkin that morning, "not to have Jack around ! I don't believe I should have missed any one of you so much. Somehow I can't get used to his being away ; can you, Mrs. Chatford ?"

A tear quivered in Mrs. Chatford's eye as she replied, "I can't be reconciled to his going in the way he did. I feel that we are responsible for the boy's future ; and if he had died I could hardly have mourned for him more than I do !"

This conversation took place at the breakfast-table, and it did not seem to help the appetites of those who heard it. The deacon shoved back his chair with a dissatisfied look ; for it was an uncomfortable subject to him, firmly as he believed himself justified in withdrawing from Jack his sympathy and support.

"I'm so glad he got away !" said little Kate ; "but I'm afraid they'll catch him again !"

"Not much danger of that," remarked Mr. Pipkin, rising slowly from the table. "A boy smart enough to do what he done yesterday, can keep clear of the clutches of the constables if he's a mind to. I'll resk Jack ! I'd be willin' to bet — By hokey !" he exclaimed in astonishment, looking from the window.

"What is it, Pip?" cried Moses.

"I've lost my bet 'fore I made it! Jack!"

"Jack!" repeated several voices at once; and there was a general rush to the windows. Annie Felton's face flushed, while Phin's turned suddenly pale. "Jack, and Sellick with him!" said the deacon, unpleasantly surprised. "I hoped — Could n't the boy keep out of the way! See what they want."

Meanwhile Sellick, with Jack by his side in the buggy in which they began their ride the day before, had driven up to the gate and turned about.

"Hullo!" cried Moses, going out to them.

"Hullo back agin," replied Sellick. "Fine morning. How's the folks? Good morning, Mis' Chatford."

"I can't say I'm glad to see you!" exclaimed the good woman from the door. "Poor boy! how does it happen?"

"Jack took such a shine to me yesterday," laughed Sellick, "he could n't bear the separation; so he come of his own accord to renew the acquaintance this morning,—or last evening,—which was it, Jack?"

"O Jack! did you give yourself up?" cried Annie Felton, alarmed to think he might have been led by her advice to take an unwise step, until the sight of his beaming countenance reassured her.

"He's too modest to say so, but that's jest it," Sellick answered for him. "I took him yesterday, and he took me this morning—by surprise. I've hardly got my breath yit. Bright boy, Jack! honest boy! Says he has done nothing he ought to go to

jail for, but if we want to put him in jail, we can ; and I vow I don't know but what that's the right view to take on 't ! ”

“ O Jack ! is this so ? ” said Mrs. Chatford, hurrying to the side of the buggy, and seizing both the boy's hands, while she looked up earnestly in his face.

“ Yes,” replied Jack, smiling frankly, yet with quivering lips and misty eyes. “ After talking with Annie last night,” — casting a glance of affectionate gratitude at the schoolmistress, — “ I concluded I had been foolish. I didn't know what I wanted to run away for. If I have done wrong, why, I 'm willing to suffer for it. I know I 've been wrong in some things. The idea of finding so much money, and then of having it taken from me, made me wild ; I was n't myself ; but I guess I 'm all right now, and I hope you 'll forgive me,” he said, winking away a tear or two.

“ Bless you, dear boy ! what have I to forgive ? ” said Mrs. Chatford, while tears ran down her own upturned face.

“ After all you had done for me, to think that I could be so cross and sullen to you and to everybody, because Squire Peternot had wronged me ; and then to have such thoughts, — I can't tell you what bad thoughts I have had ! ” Jack exclaimed, beginning to choke a little. “ But they are gone now, I hope. I 'm just going to take what comes, and make the best of it.”

“ That is right ! O Jack, I am so glad to hear you

talk so ! If you can go to jail in this spirit, it will do you no harm. I shall think more of you and hope more for you than ever ! So will all your friends.— Phineas, come here, and tell your father to come !”

“ Well, Jack ! caught, after all, are you ? ” said Mr. Chatford, walking slowly towards the gate.

“ No, sir, not caught ; Mr. Sellick won’t say I’ve been caught,” replied Jack.

“ No, I don’t take no credit to myself,” said Sellick ; “ Jack’s here of his own free will, or he would n’t be here.” And he told the story of Jack’s stay in the barn the night before, and his sudden appearance in the cow-yard that morning.

“ I think *you* ’ll be satisfied with him now,” added Mrs. Chatford ; “ for he has come of his own accord to make acknowledgments, and to ask our forgiveness.”

“ I’m heartily glad to hear it ! ” said the deacon, astonished and gratified. “ As I said before, his falsehood about Phineas, and his standing out so about it, seemed to me worse than anything else. I rejoice if he has owned up.”

“ I’m ready to own everything that I’ve done wrong ; but that is different. I was n’t going to say anything about it ; but if Mrs. Chatford meant that, when she said I had come to make acknowledgments, why, she is mistaken. I spoke nothing but the truth about Phineas, and you ’ll know it some day, and then, maybe, you ’ll be sorry for having accused me of lying ! ” Jack struggled hard to control his feelings, but now, having said this, he began to cry.

"Phineas! I told Phineas to come here," said Mrs. Chatford, "and now where has he gone?"

"I saw him sneaking off to the barn," said Mr. Pipkin. "He don't seem to hanker arter a meetin' with Jack, do no why!"

Mrs. Chatford was agitated; and the deacon appeared strangely disturbed.

"It hurt me worse than anything," Jack resumed, wiping his eyes with his sleeve, "to have you think I would try to get out of a scrape by flinging the blame on to anybody else, and then lying about it. And that's the hardest part for me to get over. But it's natural you should think so. I don't blame you. I can wait for you to find out the truth; you will some time. I've no ill-will against Phin, either; but I don't want to see him or have anything to do with him. So don't call him. I know just what he would say."

"Well, well!" said the deacon, walking up and down the path in great trouble of mind. "No doubt, no doubt! You *may* be honest. It's a strange misunderstanding! I hope it *will* be explained some day." But it was plain to see that the good man's prejudice against the boy was far from being overcome.

Meanwhile Moses went to the barn to find Phineas.

"What are ye sneaking off here for?" he cried. "Why don't you go and see Jack, and own up to your lie about him? It's your best way now."

"Hain't told any lie!" muttered Phineas. "Come out here to watch Lion, fear he'd get away."

" You sha' n't have that excuse any longer ! " exclaimed the indignant Moses. " It 's too bad to keep the poor brute chained in this way ! " And, pushing his brother scornfully aside, he loosed the dog. " Below, will you ? great baby ! — Clear, Lion ! "

Lion " cleared " ; and in ten seconds, darting past Mr. Chatford, and almost knocking Mr. Pipkin over as he encountered that gentleman standing by the gate, he leaped up on the buggy-wheel, whining, and wagging his tail, and struggling to reach his young master.

Jack reached down, and patted the large, noble head, received the caresses of the eager, affectionate tongue, and dropped a tear upon the canine nose.

" Tell Phin he need n't keep him chained ; I sha' n't steal him," he said.

" Fine fellow ! " said Sellick ; " good dog ! If you come and work for me,— in a low tone to Jack,— " bring your dog with you ; I 'll keep him."

" Peternot ought to hear to reason ! " exclaimed the deacon. " Jack, why don't you give up the money ? "

" I don't care for the money ; I 'd as soon give it up as not," Jack replied, very truly. " But I don't know where it is." He checked a natural impulse to go on and repeat Aunt Patsy's story. Jack was shrewd, and he did not believe that a revelation of what he knew of the spurious character of the coin would have the least effect in softening the squire's mind towards him. On the contrary, some advantage might yet be gained by keeping the secret.

"I suppose the Huswick boys have got it," said Mr. Chatford. "The squire had a warrant out yesterday for Cub and Hank; that's a fact, ain't it, Sellick?"

"I'll say this much," replied the constable,— "arter Jack give us the slip, we did make a call on our neighbor Huswick, and found Cub and Hank had cut stick. I never told anybody I had a warrant. You may infer what you please."

"Does Peternot know Jack has given himself up?"

"I see the hired man as we drove by; he said the squire was tending prayers. Good old man, the squire; has prayers in his family morning and evening. I told the man to tell him; so he knows by this time. He'll be waiting to see his young friend. And now, if you'll hand out that little trunk you told me you had ready for him yesterday, we'll be moving on."

Mrs. Chatford talked earnestly with her husband aside.

"I don't know what to do or think!" said the deacon. "I'll see the squire again. He *must* hear to reason!" And he walked hurriedly away towards Peternot's house.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE "RIDE" CONTINUED.

MRS. PIPKIN brought out the valise which had been packed the day before. Annie followed with an armful of books.

"These will be good companions to you, if the squire does n't relent," she said, as she handed them up to Jack with an encouraging smile.

"I've no hope of his relenting. But I don't feel as I did yesterday," said Jack. He glanced at the backs of the books. "I think I shall have a pretty good time to read and study, there in jail! Don't cry, dear little Kate! I'm all right. Take good care of Lion. Good by, all! O Mrs. Chatford! Miss Felton! I shall never forget how good you have been to me!"

"Remember and read your Testament! I put it in the valise," said Mrs. Chatford.

"And keep a good heart! I'm sure it will all turn out well. Good by, Jack!" cried Annie, as Sellick drove away.

"Go back, Lion! back!" said the boy, hastily wiping his tears. "Say good by to Moses!"

Phineas, peeping from the barn, and witnessing these farewells, almost envied Jack, as he saw him ride off with the constable; for already that wretched youngster was beginning to feel there was a worse



STARTING FOR THE JAIL.

prison for the mind than a jail,—that of its own guilty thoughts.

Deacon Chatford and the squire stood talking together on the roadside before Peternot's house, when Sellick drove up. The sight of their two faces was enough for Jack. The deacon's wore a disappointed and gloomy expression ; the squire's was grimly triumphant.

"Hold on to him this time, Sellick!" cried the old man as he limped towards the wagon, grasping with trembling hand his horn-headed cane. "If he thinks to work upon my feelin's by this move, he'll find he's mistaken. I know his cunning tricks!"

"Squire Peternot," said Jack, calmly, "I never expected to work upon your feelings. You can send me to jail, I'm willing. You can have me brought to trial, and convicted of breaking into your house, I suppose; for I don't deny what I've done."

"You see how shameless he is!" said Peternot, turning upon the deacon. "He'd as lives go to jail as not! Little he cares for public opinion, the hardened wretch!" And he struck the ground with his cane.

"If I'm sent to jail for such a thing, the shame will be on you, not on me," Jack answered. "I should think *you* cared little for public opinion, to push a poor boy to the wall in this way!" his voice beginning to quiver with a rising sense of his wrongs.

"Ho! that's your game, is it?" said the squire; "to make a martyr of yourself, and excite public feelin' agin me!"

"I never thought of such a thing!" Jack declared; and he whispered to Sellick, "Do drive along!"

Mr. Chatford was at the same time saying something in a low tone to Sellick on the other side of the buggy. Then Sellick said, "Any last word, squire?"

"My fust and last word to you is, look out for that

boy!" said Peternot, sternly. "That's all!" And he limped away towards the house.

"Jack!" then said Mr. Chatford, in an earnest tone of voice, "have n't you a last word for me?"

"Only to say good by, and to thank you for your kindness to me—before this thing happened," faltered the prisoner.

"Not that!" said the deacon. "But I hoped—I have declared I could n't do anything for you till you had retracted that falsehood about Phineas. You know, I can give bail for you, and keep you out of jail till your trial; and I will!"

"On condition that I confess to a lie?" said Jack. "Then I shall have to go to jail."

"I can't bear the idea of that!" said Mr. Chatford, greatly shaken.

"It don't trouble *me* much now," replied Jack. "It won't be long before the court sits. I shall have to go and have my trial then, anyway. And if you should bail me, you'd be anxious about me all the while,—afraid I might run away, and your bonds would be forfeit."

"No, no! not now, since you've taken this honorable course, Jack! I'll trust you; only—"

"Please don't say anything more about that, Mr. Chatford! And don't worry about me. I've been inside the jail; I know how it is there. I shall be well off, with these books. Good by!"

"Better let him try it a spell, deacon!" laughed Sellick, as he touched up his horse.

"The boy — somehow he makes me love him!" muttered the deacon, gazing after the buggy with troubled, yearning eyes. "I love him, and I believe him!" And he hurried home.

"Tell you what, sonny!" said Sellick, who had his own selfish reasons for cutting short this interview before it should lead to a better understanding, "I've thought what I'll do. Promise to come and work for me, and I'll go bail for you. You shall kind o' work for your board till arter your trial; then, if you git clear, we'll strike a bargain for a year. What do you say?"

Jack thought of his books, and of Sellick's bad reputation as an employer, and said to himself, "If he bails me, he'll expect me to hire out to him anyway, for whatever he chooses to pay. In a year I should be as hollow-cheeked and round-shouldered as poor Billy! Working for my board till my trial comes off, means working like a slave for nothing. I'd rather have a little time to read and study." Then he said aloud, "I guess, Mr. Sellick, if it's the same thing to you, I'd a little rather go to jail."

"To jail it is, then!" said Sellick, snappishly, for he felt keenly the force of this reply; and he gave his horse a cut.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ONE OF THE DEACON'S BLUNDERS.

FARMER CHATFORD hurried home, and, entering the house, found the three women seated in a circle, holding a solemn consultation.

Mrs. Chatford had just been saying, "I'm glad you did n't urge him, Annie. He don't often make up his mind in this way, but when he does it's no use arguing with him. I had said everything I could, before, to induce him to be Jack's bail; and when I mentioned the subject again—"

The deacon inferred, with reason, from the sudden manner in which this conversation ceased as he came in, and the scowl Mrs. Pipkin gave him, that his own conduct had been the topic of remark.

"Paternot is hard as a rock!" he said; then added quickly, addressing Mrs. Pipkin, "Call the boys, or your husband; tell 'em to harness up old Maje and put him in the buggy, while I change my clothes. I've thought of a little business in the city to-day."

Mrs. Chatford and Annie exchanged glances; and the former whispered, "I knew he could n't be satisfied to let Jack go off so!" Then, following him to the bedroom, "I'm glad you are going! I want you to see the doctor, and tell him about Jack. *He* will do what he can for him, I'm sure!"

"I guess there's no danger but what Jack will have everything done for him he deserves," was the ambiguous reply.

"Could n't you have any influence at all with the squire?" said Mrs. Chatford, handing him his second-best suit of clothes.

"No more than the wind that blows! Strange," added the good deacon, "how a man can be so set in his way, and refuse to let any considerations of reason or humanity have weight with him!"

"Yes, it is, very strange," remarked Mrs. Chatford, quietly.

"O papa!" cried Kate, running into the room, "what is it about bailing Jack? Would that keep him out of jail? and could you do it?"

"Hush, child!" said her father. "Bailing him might keep him out of jail a little while; but what will that amount to? He will have his trial all the same, when the court sits. The evidence is clear against him. He did break into Peternot's house; and if he did n't steal the money, he stole the bag it was in; that's the way the squire argues. I'd bail him if that would get him clear of the scrape, but it won't."

Just then Mose came in haste into the house, with the astonishing announcement that two of the "Huswick tribe" wanted to see his father.

"Cub and Hank?" cried Mr. Chatford from the bedroom.

"No; Hod and Hick." Hick (short for Hezekiah), aged twelve, was the sixth of this interesting family

of boys. "They 've got something ; I should n't wonder — "

"Bring 'em in !" said the deacon, "and be quick ! What can the scamps be after !"

He came out, buttoning his suspenders, just as Hod and Hick marched in through the kitchen, one behind the other, bearing a short pole on their shoulders, with a curious burden hanging from it, about midway between them. It was a common meal-bag, having a compact but evidently heavy freight at the bottom, while the loose top was twisted over the pole and made fast by a cord.

"What's that ?" demanded the deacon. "The money that's made all this trouble !"

"Ya-a-s !" said Hod, grinning and snuffing, and rolling his head from side to side, producing no small amount of friction between his left ear and the pole. "Boys say they don't want it. Belongs to Jack."

The deacon, far from suspecting that the rogues had the day before tried to dispose of some of the coin, and found it after all to be worthless, marvelled at this show of honesty in a quarter where it was so little to be looked for, and exclaimed, "I declare ! I can't understand ! What did they take this trouble for ?"

"'C-o-o-z !'" said Hod, rolling his head again, snuffing, and drawing his smeared sleeve across his nose,—actions which Hick, at his end of the pole, did not fail to imitate ; for it was characteristic of these young specimens of the Huswick species, that, reck-

less as they appeared in their native wilds, they were pretty sure to be overcome by a grotesque bashfulness when brought within the doors of civilized beings.

"'Cause what ?" demanded the deacon.

"C-o-o-z!" Hod rolled his eyes from him to Annie and Mrs. Chatford, and used his other sleeve. "Squire's got out warrants for 'em. Take 'em to jail. They don't want noth'n' to do with the money; want you to make him promise he won't have 'em took up; then he may have the money, for all them. They found it in the woods, where Jack hid it."

"I believe that's a lie!" said the deacon. "But no matter. I'll make as good terms for 'em as I can. Is it all here?"

"Y-a-a-s; every dollar on 't, so they say. Slip her off, Hick!" and the two treasure-bearers lowered their burden to the floor.

The deacon hastily untied the bag, looked into it, and then as hastily tied it up again.

"Good aft'noon!" said Hod. "Aft'noon!" said Hick. And they sidled towards the door, hesitating, grinning, and smearing their sleeves.

"You can get some peaches as you go through the orchard," the deacon called after them, as they disappeared. "Open the big chest there, mother! We'll lock up this stuff, till Peternot can be made to hear to reason. Is the horse ready?"

Kate caught her father as he was going out. "I want to send Jack something!" she cried. "I could n't

think of anything when he was here. But there's that half-dollar!"

"What half-dollar?"

"My half-dollar. Don't you know? you borrowed it of me the other day, when you wanted one to ring with Jack's on the doorstep."

"But I gave it back to you."

"No, you did n't. You put it in your pocket. You had on your old gray pants, and you have n't worn 'em since."

The deacon went back to the bedroom, took down the said garments from a hook, and explored the pockets.

"You're right, my girl. Here it is now. Send it to Jack if you like. What!" looking with astonishment at the coin as he was about to give it to her.

"That ain't my half-dollar!" the child exclaimed.

"That — that's Jack's!"

"Massy on me! Mother, see here! How under the sun —" stammered the bewildered deacon.

"If that don't beat all!" said Mrs. Chatford. "Feel in your other pockets."

The deacon felt, but no other half-dollar could be found.

"Must be — I do declare!" he said, fumbling and staring. "This piece has the very scratches on it! I see! I see!"

"How is it? You said you gave this half-dollar to the goldsmith!" exclaimed Mrs. Chatford. "I don't understand!"

"My plaguy absence of mind!" said the deacon, scratching his head with one hand while he held the coin in the palm of the other. "I must have put both half-dollars in my pocket, not thinking what I was about. Then — it was dark, you know — I gave the wrong one to the goldsmith! gave him Kate's instead of Jack's!"

"Then you came home and told Jack his half-dollar was a good one! O deacon! it's you that have caused him all this trouble! He never would have quarrelled with the squire, he never would have broken into his house as he did, but for your strange mistake!"

"T was a plaguy blunder! Counterfeit, counterfeit, I'll stake my life!" said the deacon, examining the coin in the bag. "Say nothing to anybody; but — See here, Moses! put it under the buggy-seat, and fling a blanket over it."

"Now, deacon!" pleaded his wife, "do use a little more, I won't say deception, but wisdom, more than you do sometimes! Don't tell the squire at once all you know, for that will be just like you."

"Think I have n't any gumption?" cried the deacon.

"No, but you're so honest, you never can use any sort of art or concealment, you know that! That's very well in all ordinary business transactions; I would n't have you cheat a body, for any consideration. But your blunder has got Jack into this scrape; and now don't explain to the squire till you've got Jack out of it again."

"As if I required to be told by a woman that a little shrewdness may be necessary sometimes in dealing with the world!" said the deacon. And, climbing into the buggy with unusual alacrity, he whipped away at an extraordinary rate of speed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DEACON'S DIPLOMACY.

FIERCELY the squire was limping to and fro, between his office-room and Mrs. Peternot's kitchen, compressing his lips, and striking the floor every now and then with his cane, as he exclaimed, "He shall lay in jail ! I'll prosecute him ! State's prison's too good for him !" when his wife called from the window, "Squire ! squire ! Here's Deacon Chatford, jest drove up ; beckonin' and hollerin' !"

"What now, I wonder ?" said Peternot, as he put on his hat and went out, frowning, to meet his neighbor. "Wal ! what is it, deacon ?"

"I've thought of a plan," said Mr. Chatford, hurriedly. "Get in here ; we'll talk as we ride. There's not a minute to lose !"

"What plan ?" demanded the stern old squire.

"For settling the difficulty."

"The diffikilty can't be settled, unless peradventur' the boy gives up the money."

"That's just it !" cried the deacon. "He said he was willing to give it up ; and now it's fallen into my hands."

"The treasure ? in your hands ?" exclaimed Peternot, limping quickly towards the buggy.

"That is," said the deacon, remembering his wife's

injunction, to use a little worldly wisdom on the occasion,—“yes, I may say, in my hands, for I know where it is; I’ve secure possession on’t; and I’ve resolved— But jump in! jump in! for we must overhaul Sellick before he delivers the boy up at the jail.”

“Wal, wal! This sounds like! — Wife! wife!” called Peternot, “hand out my gre’t-cut! May be cool ridin’. — In your hands? The best news yit! It’s comin’ out right, arter all! But, as you say, we must ketch Sellick ‘fore he gits to the jail; the case’ll haf to go before the gran’ jury, if we don’t. — Wife! wife! can’t ye step quick for once?”

Mrs. Peternot did “step quick for once”; out came the overcoat, and into it went the stiff-jointed old man. Then away rattled the buggy with the two neighbors seated side by side.

“Ketch ‘em ‘fore they git to the jail, and I can manage Judge Garty,” said Peternot. “But I must have some guarantee that the coin will be actooally restored to me, if I git the boy off.”

“If you require any other guarantee than my word of honor,” began the deacon — “Get up, Maje, go long.”

“That ought to be enough; sartin, sartin! pervised you’re sure you can put me into clear possession of the money, without any peradventur’ about it. Where is it? at your house?”

“It was brought to my house half an hour ago by two of the Huswick boys. And that reminds me,”

said the deacon, "one of the conditions is, that you shall withdraw your complaint against Hank and Cub. I forgot to mention that."

"If they've re'lly gi'n up the booty — but I can't quite see into 't!" said Peternot. "It don't seem like the Huswick tribe to part with plunder once fairly in their hands, for fear of a writ out arter 'em. Must be they don't know the vally of the coin."

"Very likely!" said the deacon, dryly. "At any rate, they have sent it to me, and commissioned me to make their peace with you." And he whipped up old Maje again.

"That seems fair. Though I own I've had my mind set on punishin' on 'em, the rogues! They swindled me out of five dollars, when they carried the coin home for me; but I s'pose I can afford to forgive 'em that. So I say, if I don't find they've kep' back a part of the treasure, I'll agree to drop the complaint."

"And another thing, squire!" said the artful deacon. "You must do the right thing by the boy; you must do something handsome for Jack."

"Yes, yes! sartin!" said Peternot. "I'll make him a present; can't say jest what, but somethin' liberal, somethin' fair and liberal, deacon, I promise!"

The deacon had to turn away to hide the smile upon his features. He did not press Peternot, to know what that "something fair and liberal" should be.

He now gave his attention to urging on old Maje's paces, fearing to mar a good matter by speaking a

word too much. Would not Mrs. Chatford give him a little credit for "gumption" after this? Had he not managed the affair with the sagacity of an accomplished politician? He began to wonder a little at the stupidity he had shown on some previous occasions, a man of his diplomatic ability; thinking particularly of the manner in which he had given Kate's half-dollar to the jeweller, instead of Jack's.

"Strange how I could have made such a blunder!" he remarked, inadvertently, to the squire.

"What blunder?" cried the squire, quickly.

Poor Mr. Chatford saw that he was on the point of letting out the very secret he had prided himself on keeping; and he lost faith in his "gumption" on the spot.

"O, I'm such a terrible absent-minded man!" he exclaimed. "I'm forever forgetting something. Remember how I drove over to the Basin that Saturday night, and walked home, never thinking of the horse and buggy, till next morning, when we thought they had been stolen, and had that famous hunt for the thieves? That's the way Jack came to live with us. Pippy arrested him, and brought him home, and he has been with us ever since," Mr. Chatford went on, congratulating himself on having steered clear of the dangerous rock. "Get up, Maje! don't be so blamed lazy! There's my nephew, Syd Chatford, crossing the road; I'll ask him if he has seen 'em pass."

"I heard he had applied for the winter's school in our deestrict," said the squire. "I hope you won't

forgit my nephew's claims. It'll help clear up all these diffikilties, and make us better neighbors than ever, if you'll bear in mind that Byron was one of the fust to apply, and give him a trial."

"I'll do what I can," replied the deacon; "for, really, I don't consider Syd just the man for the place, though he is my nephew.—Here! hello! Syd!" Syd, who had crossed the street, and was walking towards the house, turned back at his uncle's call, and approached the buggy, in a smart, stiff way.

"I have n't a minute to talk," cried the deacon. "Have you seen our Jack ride by with Neighbor Sellick?"

"Yes, about twenty minutes ago," replied Syd.

"So long!" exclaimed the deacon. "Driving fast?"

"Pretty good jog," replied Syd. "What's to pay?"

"I declare, we must do better than this, squire, or they'll be there first, in spite of us!" And Mr. Chatford chirped, and shouted, "Get up! go 'long!" and lashed old Maje again, to the no small astonishment of his nephew, who, gazing after the cantering horse and rattling buggy, wondered if the usually slow and quiet deacon had not been taking a glass of something strong.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A TURN OF FORTUNE.

SELLICK had a better horse than his neighbors, and he too had been using the whip a little since Jack respectfully declined working for him, preferring to go to jail. The merry man could not help thinking what a capital anecdote this would be to relate of anybody else; but, as I have said, he did not greatly relish a joke at his own expense.

His spirits rallied a little as they entered the city, and he said laughingly, " You remind me of the man on his way to the gallows, who was offered a free pardon if he would marry a sartin woman in the crowd, not over 'n' above handsome. He looked at her, shook his head : ' Sharp nose, thin lips,' says he ; ' drive on, cartman ! ' So, ruther 'n work for me, you 'll go to jail ! ha, ha, ha ! " And Sellick began to think he would have to tell the story, much as it reflected on his reputation as an employer.

" I did n't say just that," replied Jack. " If going to work for you would get me out of this scrape, I 'd do it. But I shall have to appear at my trial, and then, if convicted of housebreaking, have to serve out a sentence, anyway ; so the little time I 've to wait I may as well spend in jail over my books."

" I don't know but you take about the right view

on 't," said Sellick, soothed by the explanation; and the horse was allowed to slacken his speed. "I thought fust you'd been talking with Billy. Billy thinks he has a hard time; but he's slow. Me and you'd git along finely together!"

"There's the jail!" said Jack, with a sudden sinking of the heart.

"That's the mansion," remarked Sellick. "The mouse-trap, I call it; easy to git in, hard to git out. You'll have to trade hats agin now."

The constable, who had charge of the articles which the prisoner had left at the squire's at the time of his escape, had let him put on the hat when they started to ride over to the deacon's; but it was necessary for him to retain it in his custody.

"Never mind," said Jack, "I sha'n't have much use for a hat here, I suppose. Old Scarecrow's will do."

"And arter your sentence, you'll be furnished with a cap at the public expense," added the constable, as he drove up to the door of the jail.

Jack looked with gloomy misgivings at the barred windows and massy front of the great stone building; and for a moment his spirit failed him. Had he not acted foolishly in giving himself up? Once within those walls, how long before he would have his freedom again? He thought of a hundred things at once,—his first visit to the jail, when he saw his step-father, Captain Berrick, there, with the other prisoners; all his endeavors to do right, and his boasted *chance for himself*, since that day; his friends left behind, whom

he might never see again ; the strange calamity that had overtaken him, the long confinement, the dubious future. And the poor lad burst into tears.

"Come!" said Sellick. "Here we be at the end of our journey, as the runaway pigs said, when they went on the table, roasted, for dinner. Never mind your things ; I'll hand 'em out, arterwards. Here comes the kind-hearted keeper of this tavern to welcome his guest. What! crying, sonny? Changed your mind yit?"

"No!" and Jack was himself again. "I'm ready!" — his resolution to pursue an open, upright course, and take with a brave heart whatever happened, returning like a strong tide to buoy him up.

"What's that shouting?" said Sellick, glancing up the street. "Hello! if there ain't the deacon and the squire coming arter us, lickety-split! Wait a minute! Le's see what they want."

What they wanted was soon made manifest. "Judge Garty recalls his jail warrant, or he will do it; new developments in the case!" cried the deacon, breathlessly, driving up.

"Pervided the boy consents to the arrangement," added Peternot. "The money is in our hands : he agrees to abandon all claim on 't. — What do you say, before these witnesses?"

"I've already said I was willing to do that," said the astonished Jack. "But how — where did you find it — the coin, I mean?"

"The Huswick boys sent it over to my house.

You abandon your claim to it, as the squire says, and throw yourself on his liberality, on his well-known generosity," added the deacon, with a sly twinkle. "He has promised to do the handsome thing by you, the fair and liberal thing; and I've no doubt it will be all you can ask, under the circumstances."

"If he'll get me out of this fix, I shall be satisfied," said Jack; "I'll trust the rest to his — liberality, as you say." And his heart gave such a leap of joy at the thought of getting off so easily, that he came near betraying his knowledge of the spurious character of the coin, by some mirthful demonstration.

"Now you're reasonable; now you talk as a boy should!" cried Peternot, approvingly. "Turn about; let's hurry back to the judge's office, and have the matter arranged." For the old man was as anxious to secure the treasure, as Jack was eager to regain his freedom.

"You spoke jest in time," said Sellick. "A minute more, and the prisoner and the paper would have gone out of my hands. — No, thank you!" to the jailer; "you're very kind, but I don't think I shall need to trouble you this morning, — unless the boy insists on 't?" turning to Jack.

As Jack did not insist, the two buggies were turned about and started for home; Sellick, with his fresher horse, taking the lead.

"Old Maje is pretty well used up; guess the deacon never drove him quite so hard before. One thing," added the constable, "surprises me, that both

him and you should have been so willing to give up all the money, to buy off the squire. Between ourselves, he'd 'ave been glad to take one half."

"Think so?" replied Jack, coolly. "Well, it's too late now. Let him have it. I'll trust to his *liberality*."

"He's got about as much liberality as an old sow with a litter of fourteen squealing pigs and a scarcity of swill," was Sellick's rather coarse but expressive comparison. "Not that I've the least thing agin him; nice old man, the squire! Come! what do you say *now* to hiring to me?"

This question recalled to Jack's mind the obstacle which lay in the way of his return to Mr. Chatford's house, and his joy became clouded by a serious trouble.

"Come and bring your dog, you know," said Sellick. "I'm a famous story-teller; boys all like me; we'll have grand times together. What do you think you can earn? Four dollars a month?"

"I should hope so, twice that!" replied Jack, thinking this was perhaps the best he could do.

"Say six dollars, when you ain't going to school." And Sellick went on to flatter and coax the homeless lad. "Anything I can do for ye? Come, ain't there something?"

"Yes," said Jack, "one thing. I have n't felt just right about this old hat I took from Mr. Canning's scarecrow. We've plenty of time, *they* are so far behind us," casting a backward glance for the squire

and the deacon. "Drive round that way, and I'll leave it where I found it."

Sellick consented. Taking a by-road, he crossed a bridge, and drove on the north side of the canal towards the Basin, soon striking the road which passed the Canning cornfield.

Jack jumped out at the well-remembered length of fence, which he climbed again, and, running betwixt the rustling rows, discovered the patient man-of-straw waiting, bareheaded, and surrounded by blackbirds, just as he had left him the day before.

"I wish I could return the ears of corn I took, in the same way," he said to the constable, as he went back to the wagon; "but there are slight difficulties; so never mind!"

CHAPTER XL

THE SQUIRE'S TRIUMPH.

THEY found Judge Garty in his office; and soon after the deacon and Squire Peternot arrived. Once more Jack, but now with a lighter heart than before, stood before the weak-eyed, hard-winking magistrate, who supposed that the prisoner, having been retaken, was now to be admitted to bail.

"Not exac'ly that," said Peternot, while Jack listened with a trembling interest. "New sarcumstances have come to light, havin' a bearin' on the case. I've an understandin' with the boy; I'm satisfied he did n't intend burglary; it turns out to be re'ly a trivial offence; so I've ventur'd to bring the officer back with him, and I want you to recall your *mittimus*, assume jurisdiction in the case, and discharge the prisoner."

"That'll suit him, I've no doubt," said Judge Garty, winking placidly at Jack about forty times.

"It'll suit me to be discharged," replied Jack, with a smile, "though I can't say I understand his talk about it."

"A justice of the peace can't decide in anything so serious as a burglary case," said the deacon. "But since the complainant is convinced that it was n't intentional housebreaking, it is different. The justice

can assume jurisdiction, that is, take the case in hand, and decide it."

"T will be a little irregular," remarked Judge Garty, rubbing the top of his bald head with the feather end of his quill pen, and winking wonderfully fast. "Moreover, there's the costs. I suppose the complainant will in this case pay the costs?"

"Sartin, sartin," said the squire, thinking he would thus discharge all obligations to the boy he had persecuted.

Judge Garty accordingly went through the formality of putting Peternot under oath again, hearing the case, and pronouncing the prisoner discharged, all in about three minutes' time. Then Peternot, with a grimace and a twinge, pulled out his pocket-book, and paid the following bill:—

Costs of court	\$ 2.35
Mittimus, and binding over witnesses50
Witnesses' fees and travel (2 miles each, 5 cts. a mile)	1.20
Sheriff's fee	2.50
Lock broken by sheriff after prisoner had locked up the court, and it became necessary for the court to get out25
Window broken by ladder37
Total	<hr/> \$ 7.17

As Peternot and his nephew were the witnesses, the squire's actual expenditures in the case amounted to five dollars and ninety-seven cents.

"Now!" said he, eager to be consoled for what had caused him such a pang, "for *your* part of the agreement, deacon!"

"Well, come with me," said Mr. Chatford, with a peculiar smile. "The *treasure* ain't far off."

And, leading the way down the office stairs, to his buggy standing at the foot of them, he pulled up the seat, lifted a horse-blanket, and pulled from beneath it the squire's meal-bag and its heavy freight of coin. Peternot grasped it eagerly.

"I must say, deacon, you've played this party well! I'd no idee you had it with ye! I 'most wish you had n't made it quite so public, though," for the usual village crowd had assembled. "I'm afraid—I—I ruther think I'll take it over to the store and have it locked up in the safe."

"You have n't settled with the boy; what ye going to give the boy?" cried Sellick, comfortably patting his fee in his trousers-pocket.

"The boy!" echoed Peternot, a frown of displeasure clouding the sunshine which played for a moment over the barren and rocky waste of his features. "Arter all the trouble and expense he's put me to? I said I'd be liberal, and I have been liberal. I've paid the costs of court, and got him off; for which he may thank his stars, and think himself lucky. I won't be hard, though." The squire put his hand into the bag, as if about to present Jack one of the rusty half-dollars; but changed his mind, and thrusting his hand into his pocket, took out a silver

quarter. "Here ! take that ! I 've nothin' else to give ye."

Jack laughed, took the coin, and immediately presented it to a shabby little old man in the crowd, who received it with quaint surprise.

"You are Mr. Canning, I believe," said Jack.

"That 's my name, that 's my name. But what 's this for ? What 's this ?"

"I had to borrow a hat from your scarecrow, and take a few ears of your corn to roast, yesterday," said Jack. "I 've returned the hat, and this is to settle for the corn. I 'm going to begin life new, and I want to begin right with everybody."

"That 's right, that 's right ! You 're welcome to the corn, though; welcome to a few ears of corn, to be sure ! to be sure !" cried the shabby old man, pocketing the money, however, and walking off with it, looking, in his old-fashioned, long-tailed, tattered coat, like one of his own scarecrows out taking a little exercise.

"Come, Jack, where are you going ?" cried the deacon.

"Back into the office, to find the hat I left there when I ran away."

"I carried that home. Now let 's be going. There 'll be an outburst in a minute," said the deacon, casting an anxious glance after Peternot, who was carrying his bag of coin into the jeweller's shop.

"Jack is going home with me ; me and him 's struck a bargain," said Sellick.

"Fie, fie! nonsense!" said the deacon. "We can't spare Jack; he's going with *me*."

"I'll ride with you. I'd like to talk with you a little, and go home and say good by—and—and get my dog," faltered Jack; "but you know—"

"Yes, yes! that misunderstanding between you and Phineas. O, never mind about that!"

"I must!" said Jack. He is your son, and of course you don't want—"

"I want what's right, son or no son. Come along!" And the good deacon half lifted Jack into the buggy. "There's Peternot now!"

It was Peternot, indeed, rushing out of the jeweller's shop with wrath in his countenance and several spurious half-dollars in his hand.

"Wait! wait!" he shouted, advancing towards the buggy as fast as his limp would allow. "Deacon! how's this? You've desailed, you've ruined me!"

"Deceived! ruined you! how so?" asked the deacon, calmly.

"He says you brought him a half-dollar to test, but not one of these!" cried the excited squire.

"Yes, yes; a blunder of mine; I was telling you how dreadful absent-minded I am, you remember."

"These are counterfeit!"

"Are they, indeed? Well, I'm not surprised."

"But you never told me!"

"No, squire; I'd done so much mischief by telling that the coin was genuine, I thought I'd hold my tongue, after I found out what a mistake I'd made.



THE SQUIRE'S TRIUMPH.

But I don't see that you are ruined. You've given yourself some trouble and expense, in order to get the treasure into your hands, that's all. You've done one good thing, though, in getting this boy off, and we appreciate it."

"I'll have him up agin!" said the squire, furiously.
"O no, neighbor! I hardly think you will. No 'new circumstances' have come to light in his case

since you swore to your last statement ; and for you to complain of him again would plainly be a case of malicious prosecution. He ain't to blame for my blunder. *I* deceived *him* with regard to the coin ; he has n't deceived anybody. Did n't know but what it was good till this minute ; did you, Jack ? ”

“ Yes,” said Jack, with a grin. “ Aunt Patsy told me last night it was some of Sam Williams’s bogus. But I thought it just as well not to say anything about it. I wanted to see how liberal he was ! ”

The deacon smiled, the spectators laughed, and Peternot, turning angrily on his heel, stalked back to the jeweller’s shop, where he had left his bag of “ treasure.”

“ Well, now we ’ll go home,” said the deacon, touching up old Maje.

CHAPTER XLI.

HOW IT ALL ENDED.

GREAT was the joy at the farm-house over Jack's return. Mrs. Chatford shed motherly tears on his neck; little Kate hugged him as high up as she could reach; while Mrs. Pipkin, and Mr. Pipkin and Mose, who had just come in to dinner, looked on with faces shining with delight and sympathy. Only Phin appeared not altogether enchanted with the turn affairs had taken; and the envious, hypocritical expression of his grinning face changed to genuine alarm as Mr. Chatford said, "Jack has come just to say good by, and to get his dog."

"His dog?" cried Phin. "Our dog! He can't have our dog!"

"It is his dog, and nobody else's," said the deacon, sadly. "And though I don't want to part with either of 'em, especially since Jack has shown himself such a man, we can't detain him; and of course he can take his dog, if he chooses. Sellick has made him an offer."

"But you have n't accepted it, have you, Jack?" said Mrs. Chatford.

"Not yet, but —"

"What does he go for?" demanded Phineas, disturbed at the prospect of losing Lion.

"Because you've lied about him, and he can't live

in the house with you!" said the deacon, with extraordinary sternness.

"I did n't lie," whimpered Phin. "I remember now I did say something to him like what he said."

"Then own up that it was a lie!"

"I did n't mean it; I wanted him to get back his money, and I thought you said *something* of the kind."

"You thought no such thing! O Phineas! Phineas!" And the deacon almost wept with sorrow over his son's meanness and untruth.

"I hope you 'll forgive me; I hope he will," whined Phin.

"I do," said Jack, frankly, "now that you have owned up."

"And you 'll let Lion stay?"

"Lion is all he cares for!" said Moses, with angry contempt, as Phin slunk away out of sight.

"O, here comes cousin Annie!" cried little Kate.

Jack ran eagerly to meet his dear friend, but started back on seeing at her side his new acquaintance, Percy Lanman.

The beautiful schoolmistress kissed him openly, in right sisterly fashion, and rejoiced over the good news. Percy pressed his hand warmly, and said, with that bright, good-humored look of his, "I was out botanizing, and stopped at the school-house to get news of you; and as Miss Felton was just starting to walk home, I walked with her."

"I'm glad you did," said Jack. "Here is the money I owe you." Percy took it with a smile.

"There ! now I've paid all my debts, I'm even with the world, and ready to begin again ! — Yes, Kate, dear Kate ! I'll stay ; I've nothing to go for now. — Old Lion ! get down, you good fellow ! you silly boy's dog !" And Jack dashed away a tear. " You are all so good to me ! I never was so happy in my life ! "

And yet it gave him a curious feeling, something that was not quite unclouded joy, to see his two friends, Percy Lanman and Annie Felton, standing there, smiling, side by side. Though what there was in that to trouble him I cannot precisely say ; can any one guess ?

Still a happy boy indeed was Jack. His great trouble had passed by ; and he had no more dread of the jail, of trial and sentence. His brief experience of the cares and snares of riches had taught him wisdom, and the upright course he resolved upon at last had developed a conscious strength and manliness in his heart, richer than any fortune. He was once more in his dear home, with his dearest friends around him, their confidence in him restored, and their love for him increased. And now, not selfishly as before, but very gratefully, very lovingly, he felt that he had for the first time in his life, rightly and truly,

A CHANCE FOR HIMSELF.

